

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2010. I hope you've had a healthy, happy start to the year.

We've got big plans for the project designed to make Suffolk the healthiest county in Britain during the next 12 months – and you can help!

If you made any resolutions at the start of the new year, why not turn them into a *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* pledge and tell us all about them in the members section of our website, at www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk?

It's completely free to sign up and will give you access to a range of exclusive features, including message boards where you can share healthy recipes, fitness tips and general advice.

One great way of making sure you stick to your resolutions is to use our online health manager. Available www.healthyambitionssuffolk.co.uk, you can use the health manager to assess your current health, decide what you'd like to improve and use a range of specially tailored tutorials and ongoing support to reach your goals. It couldn't be easier!

If you run a community group and have a great idea for improving the health of those around you, we may be able to offer you some financial support to get your project off the

ground. Keep reading to find out more about our grants scheme, and how it could benefit your group.

As ever, we're keen to hear your ideas on making the *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* initiative even bigger and better than ever before. Feel free to email us at info@healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk and share your thoughts.

Dr Peter Bradley
Director of Public Health
for NHS Suffolk and
Suffolk County Council



Groups driving vital health projects to benefit their communities have been given the opportunity to bid for all-important funding to make their own healthy ambitions become a reality.

The *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* grants programme currently has around £200,000 available each year until 2012 for both new and existing health projects which will benefit people living and working in the county. Three separate grant schemes are available, with initiatives of all sizes invited to step forward and apply for a share of the funding. The schemes are:

- **small grants** from £250 to £900, for groups looking to run one-off or short-term events or activities, pilot a small project or buy relevant equipment.
- **healthy living grants** of up to £4,000. These are available for groups

Cash boost for vital community health projects

tackling some of the county's key health priorities, which include improving mental health and wellbeing in the workplace and among children and young people and promoting healthy living for older people.

- **large grants** of up to £15,000, for researching or

introducing larger projects which address new and emerging health issues.

All of the grants are aimed at community and voluntary groups run and led by local people. This could include residents and tenants groups, allotment societies, self-help groups

or any organisations working to promote health and wellbeing.

"We are keen to hear from any projects which show fresh approaches and new ideas for addressing health issues within our communities," said Sally Hogg, head of health

improvement partnerships at NHS Suffolk. "This could include a whole range of initiatives, such as new self-help groups, setting up community allotments or projects to improve mental health and wellbeing.

"We want this grants scheme to make a real difference to people's lives by helping to tackle the county's health inequalities. As such, we're especially keen to hear about projects taking place in those areas of greatest need, and would encourage the people driving these initiatives to get in touch to find out more."

The next round of grants will be decided on 1 April, and the deadline for applications is 25 March. Groups interested in a *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* grant should contact Sue Wright, who is coordinating the scheme, on **01473 734127**, to discuss their ideas before making an application.

**Lots more
inside**

Fit for work >> Cameron's a champion! >> Beat the blues >>

Sign up and cycle to health in 2010!



Businesses from across Suffolk have been challenged to help their staff to a healthier, happier 2010 by making it easier for them to cycle to work.

Healthy Ambitions
Suffolk has laid down the gauntlet to employers from around the county to sign up to the government's 'cycle to work guarantee' scheme. The scheme, run by the Department of Transport and 'Bike 4 Life', which is part of the Department of Health's 'Change 4 Life' scheme, offers encouragement and incentives to staff to ditch their car in favour of a

bicycle – in turn helping both their health and the environment.

As part of the project, employers are being urged to introduce a range of simple, low cost measures to help their staff get on their bikes, including providing secure, safe and accessible bike parking and changing and locker facilities. Companies can also take part in the cycle

to work scheme, which gives staff the chance to offset the cost of buying a bicycle against tax, while some are offering a mileage rate for those travelling to meetings on their bike rather than in a car.

For more information on the cycle to work guarantee, visit <http://www.cycletoworkguarantee.org.uk/index.php>



Vulnerable people from across Suffolk can now get help direct to their doorstep thanks to a new scheme launched this month.

Help direct to people's doorstep

Homesield Plus, run by a variety of agencies working in close partnership, will see around 7,500 people from across Suffolk given extra support through a free one-stop-shop service taken direct

to their doorstep. As part of the service, frontline officers will target those most in need so that preventable health and wellbeing risks, such as crime, fires and accidents, can be reduced, in turn improving quality of life.

If you, or someone you know, could benefit, please contact the Homesield Plus team, on 0845 6034715, to find out more

Help to beat the winter blues

Suffolk's libraries have been offering people special help to "beat the winter blues" during a week-long campaign to highlight Suffolk County Council's mental health and wellbeing service.

Held earlier this month, the campaign was designed to raise awareness of the help available to an estimated one in eight people who experience low mood at this time of year.

A series of events were held across the county, signposting people to the mental health and wellbeing

service for practical advice on tackling symptoms such as lethargy and sleep problems.

Cllr Rosemary Clarke, the council's portfolio holder with responsibility for health and wellbeing, said: "There is no denying that this can be the worst time of year for many of us, which is why we wanted people to know about all we have on offer in our libraries to help them cope.

"The week of activities was designed to show how much information, advice



and opportunities we have to help people shake off the winter blues and take steps towards promoting positive mental health."

For more information on the services available through Suffolk's libraries, visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/Libraries/HealthInformation/MentalHealthandWellbeing

Know your limits!



A hard-hitting new campaign designed to raise awareness of the unseen health damage of regularly drinking too much alcohol has been launched across the UK.

The £6million government-funded campaign will create the series of stark TV, press and outdoor adverts showing the harm that regularly drinking more than two drinks a day can cause. Its launch coincides with a new YouGov poll which shows that more than half (52%) of drinkers in the east of England mistakenly believe that alcohol only damages your health if you regularly get drunk or binge drink.

The campaign aims to raise awareness that regularly drinking more than the recommended amount can significantly increase the risk of stroke, high blood pressure, heart attack and cancers of the mouth and breast. It hopes to reverse trends which currently see more than 9,000 in the UK die each year from alcohol-related causes.

More information about the campaign, along with interactive tools to help you make healthier choices, is available at www.nhs.uk/drinking

Cameron's a champion!



If you're planning to make 2010 the year you give up smoking for good, Cameron Lower's story may give you just the inspiration you need!

For nine-year-old Cameron has become a real champion in his mum Tina's eyes after helping her kick the habit once and for all. After spending the last year charting her efforts to stop smoking, he was rewarded with free tickets to watch his favourite team, Ipswich Town Football Club, and was also given his own, personalised Town shirt.

Tina, from Bury St Edmunds, got help to quit after signing up to the HERS (health enhancement reward scheme) when she fell pregnant last year. At the project she was given a special chart to take home for Cameron to fill in to encourage her to stay off tobacco. Cameron said: "Every week if mum had not smoked I put another sticker on the chart. At the end of each month she got a gold star! When mum had stopped for a whole year the chart was full and I was really proud of her!

"I was really pleased when mum said she would stop smoking because I know it's bad for you and can make you really ill. I used to nag her all the time and say how much I wanted her to stop smoking. I wanted her to know how important it was to me that she stopped. I was scared she would get ill or even die"

Cameron's reward for all of his hard work and encouragement was arranged thanks to a partnership between the Suffolk Stop Smoking Service and Ipswich Town Football Club's Community Trust. Matt Try, from the Ipswich Town Community Trust, said: "It's fantastic that Cameron has managed to help his mum to stay away from cigarettes for a whole year – he really deserves this prize!"

For more information on how you could follow Tina's lead, visit <http://www.suffolkstopsmokingservice.co.uk>

Giving you more to smile about

It's never been easier to take good care of your teeth – with the help of an NHS dentist.

There are now more than 110 dental surgeries across the county, with new surgeries

opened in Hadleigh, Bury St Edmunds, Leiston and Rendlesham during the past 12 months. Further new surgeries at Kesgrave, Needham Market and Great Cornard will also open early this year.

Clare Banyard, head of

primary care at NHS Suffolk, said: "Our message is loud and clear – you can get an NHS dentist in Suffolk. We're trying to make it easier for people to have regular check-ups at local practices. By doing so, problems can be detected at an early stage."

Treatment is free for those aged under 18, while information about additional cost exemptions is available at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk. For those not exempt from payment, treatment is divided into three bands with set prices starting from £16.50.

You can find your nearest dentist by calling PALS, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service and dental helpline, on **0800 389 6819**.

Claire makes sure Suffolk's fit for work!

Healthy Ambitions Suffolk has welcomed a new member to the team after Claire Parker was appointed as fit for work coordinator. Claire will be helping businesses across the county to introduce their own 'fit for work' programmes which will, in turn, help them towards a special HAS business award.

Fit for work is designed to raise awareness of the benefits which having active and healthy employees can bring to businesses, such as considerable financial savings, fewer days off sick and increased productivity. Claire will be looking for ways in which organisations across Suffolk can work together to encourage employees to become more active.

"Economically and socially, this is a very challenging time for businesses and for individuals alike," said Claire, whose role has been funded for 12 months. "But being an active and healthy member of staff can offer benefits for both the



organisation and the individual.

"Fit for work is not about sweating in the gym for hours and eating only lettuce leaves. It's about developing opportunities for staff to become a little bit more active on a daily basis as part of a cost saving strategy for businesses. Delivered effectively, fit for work is good for health and good for business."

Claire's role will kick off with a walking initiative called 'carrying the flame'. This project encourages

business teams across Suffolk to collectively walk the distance from Beijing, the host country of the 2008 Olympics, to Ipswich ahead of the UK hosting the Games in 2012. In addition, the project hopes to raise awareness of how many steps we should aim to do every day to achieve health.

For more information about 'carrying the flame', or to apply for a HAS business award, please contact Claire at claire.parker@ipswich.gov.uk

Sign up now for the Great East Swim 2010



If you haven't booked your place for the British Gas Great East Swim 2010, then now is the perfect time to do so!

Following its success in 2009, the one-mile outdoor swim event will return to Alton Water, near Ipswich, on Saturday 19 June. Safe

and enjoyable, it gives everyone the chance to set themselves a challenge, get together friends or colleagues to take part or raise money for charity.

Last year's event saw a huge variety of people taking part, including an amputee who lost his leg, a deaf-blind swimmer, a swimmer who spent nine months in a coma and

one entrant who was 86 years old.

The event in Suffolk will be the first of a series of four taking place in the summer, with the tour also visiting London, Strathclyde and Lake Windermere. Entrants must be aged 16 or over and places are limited – so book your spot now at www.greatswim.org



Boosting health at the Bangladeshi Support Centre

For more than a decade, the Bangladeshi Support Centre based in Ipswich has been providing vital help, support and guidance to thousands of people across Suffolk. A registered charity and reputed community organisation, the centre's nine part-time staff have developed and delivered a range of projects and activities including a befriending scheme, training project, annual community day and IT classes. The centre also offers a face-to-face drop-in service for anyone in need of support and guidance.

An exciting new health project is the latest in the centre's line of innovations. Launched at the end of last year, it aims to raise awareness of major health issues which are prevalent within the Bangladeshi community, such as heart disease, and change attitudes towards healthy living.

"We are a community-based organisation which works with people to bring direct benefits to their quality of life," said Mojlum Khan, the centre manager. "That's why we decided to launch this health

project, which gives people practical support and guidance on the changes they could make. Health is an issue which is very close to our hearts, so we wanted to do something which would make a difference.

"We've employed two part-time project coordinators, who will be concentrating on educating people around areas such as choosing healthy food options and increasing their activity levels. We'll also be looking at a range of other innovations which encourage people to live a healthier lifestyle, and plan to run the project over a number of years so that we can gradually change people's attitudes towards their health."

The project has been kick started by a Beacon grant, and is one of only a handful of pilots across the country. Over the coming weeks, the two project coordinators will draw up an action plan giving full details of the steps the centre will take to help people to help themselves.

"We believe this project has got the potential to have a huge positive impact on people's

health," added Mr Khan. "For example, many of the so-called Indian takeaways across the county are run by Bangladeshis. If we can encourage them to use olive oil and other healthier ingredients instead of ghee in their cooking, their health will benefit, as will the health of their customers.

"We want to have an impact on everything, from the food which families put into lunchboxes for their children to the meals they enjoy as family in the evening. Activity is also very important, and we're keen to target all age groups and abilities. We already organise a ladies group which meets at a local leisure centre to try out lots of different sports, and see the health project making a real difference."

The Bangladeshi Support Centre offers help and guidance to people from across Suffolk. For more information on the centre's work, please contact Mr Khan on **01473 400081**, email mojlum.khan@bscentre.org.uk or visit www.bscentre.org.uk

Fitter, healthier and happier

Young people keen to get fitter, healthier and happier have been given the chance to sign up to a special programme designed to increase their activity levels and teach them about healthy food choices.



Called MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition... Do it!) the programme is available across the county – and has already brought huge benefits to scores of children in Suffolk – including Jay Duff, aged ten, and his 12-year-old sister Kimberley.

"We started the MEND programme because Jay had problems with bullying at school and Kimberley has had weight problems and nothing in the past has worked," said mum Julie. "We've tried diets and she has seen a whole range of doctors and dieticians, but none of it has helped.

"We saw an advert for MEND in the local paper and thought we may as well give it a go. It has been brilliant and has really worked. I come along each week with the kids and we have an hour sitting around and chatting about how they have been the previous week and they then go and exercise for an hour.

"The difference is that the exercise is such fun. They made friends with all the other kids who were coming along, and the wonderful thing is that they are all here for the same reason so they don't feel picked on.

"The parents also get loads of advice about what to feed the kids and I have found that really helpful. It's made me a lot more aware of what is actually in the food we eat.

"I've really noticed the difference in the kids. Jay has got so much more confidence now and has taken up rugby after school, which he would never have done before. The kids also understand far more about healthy eating and the foods you should eat because the MEND staff explain it in a simple way so they get the message. It has definitely made a difference in the choices I am making in what the kids eat."

For more information or to find your nearest MEND <http://www.mendprogramme.org>

Introducing...Your chance to meet the team members.

Two more more members of the *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* team – Olivia Cooper and Terry Baxter

Olivia Cooper -

Global human resources initiatives director, Willis Ltd, and HAS board member



Why did you become involved in the *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* project?

As one of the largest employers in the area with over 1,200 employees, we are always looking to help improve the wellbeing and health of our associates. This can be through our occupational health teams, who provide regular screening programmes for cholesterol and blood pressure, or by working closely with the catering teams in our restaurant to provide healthy menu choices. It is a hot topic for us and therefore any ideas which

can be shared, or new initiatives which can be introduced, can only be a good thing.

What do you think the biggest thing that people in Suffolk could do to improve their health and wellbeing?
Get active and walk more!

Have you made your own *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* pledge – if so, what is it?

Yes I have. It is to exercise at least three times a week, with two of those sessions at the weekend when I take the dogs for at least an hour's walk, which means I just need to get to the gym one evening out of five. I've also pledged to

lose 28 pounds, and have lost 17 pounds so far.

What would you say to inspire people in Suffolk to make their own healthy ambitions become a reality?

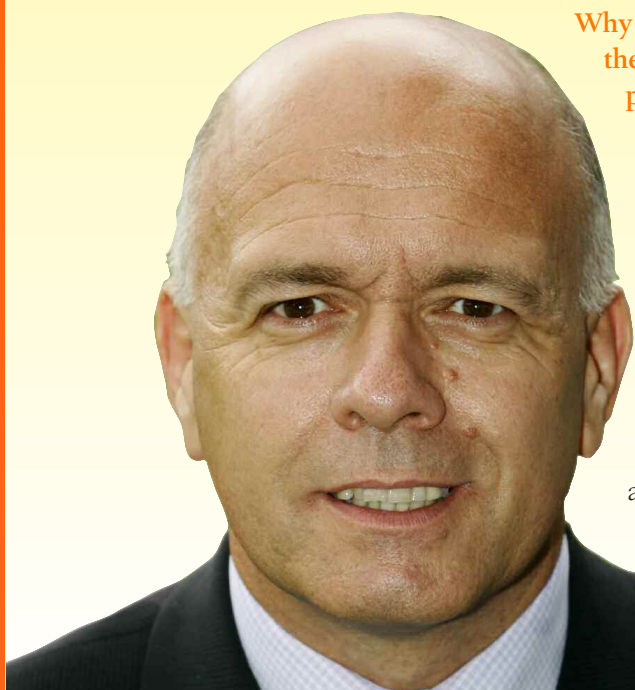
Don't bite off more than you can chew. Set yourself realistic goals which you know you can achieve and then build on them.

Do you have any handy hints or tips which you can share to help others lead a healthier lifestyle?

Eat fruit if you need to snack in between meals, use the stairs instead of the lift and get out and enjoy the fresh air!

Terry Baxter -

Chief executive of Ipswich Town Community Trust and HAS board member



Why did you become involved in the *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* project?

Well, because I believe in what HAS is trying to achieve. Many of us are of the opinion that drinking less, eating a healthy diet and taking more exercise are valid messages but that they are dull and uninspiring. *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* has a fantastic ability to change those perceptions and I am happy to part of such a forward thinking "can do" board.

What do you think the biggest thing that people in Suffolk could do to improve their health and wellbeing?

Take small steps. Much better to start slowly, setting achievable targets and build on successes rather than being overly ambitious and losing the motivation. But, the overall thing is to do something! We live in a great county and within relatively small distances for almost everyone in Suffolk you can find wonderful parks or country walks which are easily accessible.

Have you made your own *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* pledge – if so, what is it?

Yes. My BMI index is too high and I am

determined to address that. As last year my good intentions of swimming two to three times a week faded, I'm aiming to get back to that level of commitment over the next 12 months. The ridiculous thing is I know how much better I feel when I have exercised, and as I detest running it is more swimming for me this year!

Do you have any handy hints or tips which you can share to help others lead a healthier lifestyle?

Don't do it on your own! Find someone to join you. It's much better to have someone to motivate you, especially on those days when your good intentions are being tested.



Don't forget to register!

Don't forget that you can register through our website to help make Suffolk the healthiest county in England by 2028. It only takes five minutes and will give you the chance to make your own health pledge, share tips with others and gain access to all of the help and advice you need to make your own personal health goals a reality. Simply log on to www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk and click on "join now".

Keeping up to date with our future news

We'll be sending out regular bulletins giving details of all the latest *Healthy Ambitions Suffolk* news over the coming months. To subscribe, email info@healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk adding "HAS News" to the subject line.

For more information about any of our new projects, contact NHS Suffolk's communications team on 01473 770014 or visit www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk