

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

3 March 2008

NEW POST PROPOSAL: ACTIVE LIFESTYLES OFFICER

REPORT OF HEAD OF CULTURAL SERVICES

Contact Officer: Sports and Recreation Manager Amanda Ford Tel No: 01962 848274

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

An opportunity has arisen to establish an Active Lifestyles Officer, due to success in securing external funding to cover 50% of the costs of such a post for the next four financial years.

A funding partnership with national body Sport England and DC Leisure at River Park Leisure Centre, combined with monies set aside from existing revenue budgets in the cultural services division, would enable the creation of the new post. The Active Lifestyles Officer would significantly contribute to improving healthy lifestyles and increasing levels of physical activity amongst adults in the Winchester District by providing a GP referral service and a health walks programme.

This report provides more information about the proposed post and the funding to support it, and seeks Member approval to add it to the City Council establishment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee approves an increase in the Cultural Services Division's staff establishment for an initial period of four years of one scale 4 FTE through the creation of an Active Lifestyles Officer post.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members may recall in past years that Hampshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) hosted a post responsible for GP referrals to which Winchester City Council made a 50% financial contribution. The post became more strategic and less delivery-focused over time, and by April 2006 it was not considered to be providing a measurable return on the City Council's investment so the Council withdrew its funding. The Council's contribution of £15k per annum has been ring fenced to support short term physical activity-based projects since this time, and is held by the sports and recreation team.
- 1.2 At present, some GP referrals are provided on an *ad hoc* basis by a part time fitness instructor employed by DC Leisure, the contractor at River Park Leisure Centre. This amounts to approximately four hours a week.
- 1.3 Government and Local Area Agreement targets to increase healthy lifestyles as a means to reduce illness and so pressure on the National Health Service continue to make an effective exercise referral scheme desirable as it has the potential to make a major impact at a local level. A national target has been set by Government for 70% of the adult population to be taking regular physical activity (a minimum of three times a week). At present, this figure stands at 26% for the Winchester District.
- 1.4 Officers have therefore been seeking external funding to enable a new, refocused post to be established, working across the District under the supervision of the sports and recreation team.

2 The Role of the Active Lifestyles Officer

- 2.1 Following discussions with DC Leisure, Sport England, Hampshire PCT and the Health and Wellbeing Strategic Outcome Group of the Local Strategic Partnership, officers believe that the appointment of a full time Active Lifestyles Officer would significantly drive up regular, adult sport and physical activity levels among adults.
- 2.2 The post-holder would be responsible for the delivery of an efficient and well-promoted exercise referral scheme as well as a Health Walks programme. In addition, they would organise a wide range of events and initiatives to encourage increased levels of physical activity.
- 2.3 Exercise Referrals: each referred patient would sign up to a 16 week physical activity prescription programme designed to improve their health by adopting new active routines on a sustained basis. Activities would be offered at a reduced rate to participants, and include swimming, aqua therapy, gym sessions and cardiac rehabilitation. The scheme would be aimed at anyone

over the age of 16 who may be at risk of conditions that would benefit from an increase in physical activity. These conditions include:

- a) overweight/obesity (often leading to additional complications such as diabetes and heart disease)
- b) smoking
- c) high blood pressure
- d) stress

The work would involve close liaison with GPs, health visitors and nurses to promote the scheme and expand the number and type of referrals on offer.

- 2.4 Health Walks would also be offered as part of the scheme. These would be free of charge, at key sites in the Winchester District including River Park and Meadowside Leisure Centres. The post holder could also recruit and train other volunteers to lead walks and activities to extend the reach of the service.
- 2.5 The post would be based at River Park Leisure Centre, as contractors DC Leisure have offered office space and IT equipment as part of their in kind contribution. However, the post holder would be managed directly by Winchester City Council. Hampshire PCT would be involved in the recruitment and evaluation processes.

3 Evaluation

- 3.1 Sport England requires regular evaluation of the success of the projects which it grant aids, and a number of performance measures have already been agreed. Overall, it is hoped that a minimum of 480 new referrals and 18,000 additional attendances at leisure sites per year will be achieved as a result of the work of the Active Lifestyles Officer.
- 3.2 Other measures of success will include:
- number of GPs referring
 - number of referrals per GP practice
 - numbers attending health walks
 - numbers continuing 3 x 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week after 6 months
 - number of qualified walk leaders
- 3.3 The post holder would be expected to be part of the Hampshire Exercise Referral Forum, where representatives of a wide range of schemes to promote healthy lifestyles share best practice and provide support and advice.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 4.1 The post directly supports the 'safe and strong communities' priority of the corporate strategy as it would 'promote health and well-being by supporting the promotion of healthy lifestyles'.

- 4.2 It also supports the emerging themes of the new Local Area Agreement, one of which is to 'promote and improve the health and well-being of people in Hampshire'.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Because the partnership funding is set at a fixed rate, the overall budget for the post makes allowance for estimated annual increments and cost of living rises over a four year period and assumes a mid-grade starting salary. Any money not spent on the salary and associated on-costs would be allocated to recruitment, ongoing marketing of the service, volunteer training and essential materials and supplies.

City Council £15,000 ring fenced from previous GP referral post

DC Leisure £ 3,000

Sport England £15,000

Total £33,000

- 5.2 In addition, Hampshire County Council has offered £3,000 from LPSA2 funds as a contribution to start-up costs in year one such as promotion of the service and purchase of equipment.

- 5.3 DC Leisure has offered a further £4,500 of in-kind support, such as office space, IT equipment, parking and training.

- 5.4 The Sport England funding is for a four year period, and it would be necessary to review the viability of the post during the 4th year. However, Hampshire PCT has already written a letter of support for the project and indicated that it will consider making a financial contribution from year five.

- 5.5 In view of the reliance of the post on external funding, it is proposed that the Active Lifestyles Officer be established on a four year basis initially, subject to a full review during 2010/11.

- 5.6 At the end of the four year period of guaranteed funding, there is a degree of financial risk to the Council. If no further external funding has been identified, there could be a shortfall on post funding of £14,700 pa as follows:

5.7	Salary (spinal point 30 top of grade plus on costs)	£29,700
	Ringfenced WCC funding	<u>(£15,000)</u>
	Shortfall	£14,700

Alternatively, there may be potential severance costs. However, these risks could be managed by:

- a) accruing part of the annual working budget for the budget to offset severance costs;
- b) reviewing the post if the post-holder decided to leave before the four year contract had terminated;

- c) seeking further external funding (e.g. from the PCT) during the final year review.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Active Lifestyles Officer job description and person specification

Appendix 2 – Organisation chart showing post holder reporting line

DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

Appendix 1 – PER 137

JOB TITLE: Active Lifestyles Officer

DEPARTMENT: Cultural Services

POST NUMBER:

GRADE: 4

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Sports Development Officer

LOCATION: West Wing

POST OBJECTIVE

To develop and promote an exercise referral scheme and health walks initiative to encourage a healthy lifestyle for adults in the Winchester District through increased physical activity programmes.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

1. Supervise the operation of the exercise referral scheme based at River Park Leisure Centre, Meadowside Leisure Centre and other facilities in the Winchester District where possible.
2. Ensure that adequate administration systems exist to monitor the operation of the referral scheme and implement improvements when required.
3. Provide information on the number of referrals and income generated from referred activities to the Sports Development Officer on a monthly basis. Conduct an evaluation and detailed report of the Scheme annually and submit recommendations for the year ahead in November of each year.
4. Maintain effective communication systems with DC Leisure and other facilities within the District which offer exercise on prescription to adequately respond to the changing needs of exercise referrals, operation issues and funding opportunities.
5. Take the lead role in coordinating the health walks scheme, and seek to secure funding for the establishment of a district wide scheme in partnership with the British Heart Foundation.
6. Coordinate the efforts of a Steering Group for the Walking Scheme and oversee all aspects of its operation, from the planning stage, through to its evaluation.
7. Ensure that all aspects of the Scheme's operation meet with the Council's health & safety policy and procedures, and ensure that all volunteer walk leaders are identifiable, and fully trained when undertaking their role.
8. Establish and develop a programme of modified physical activity classes for target groups which meet with the expectations and requirements of the Primary Care Trust. This may be provided through the use of suitably qualified existing members of staff at sport and recreation facilities within the District.

9. Develop a means of promoting the Active Lifestyle Service on a regular basis to residents of the district and key stakeholders (including Winchester City Councillors, GP surgeries and the Primary Care Trust).
10. Assist with research projects when required in order to shape the future provision of sport and physical activity within the District.
11. Assist with the production of performance indicators which help monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the exercise referral scheme and health walks scheme.
12. Ensure that the Council's financial resources for the Active Lifestyle service are used and monitored appropriately in order to demonstrate best value for the local community.
13. Develop evaluation systems for all Active Lifestyle services which measure the effectiveness of physical activity and aim to ensure that future partnership funding from health agencies will be forthcoming.
14. Carry out duties in a safe and proper manner both for this post and for the well being of others in accordance with the Council's health & safety policy.
15. Provide a good level of customer care both within the Council and for the general public and external Partners.
16. Carry out duties in accordance with the Winchester city Council's equal opportunities policy.

Signed

Dated

Version date February 2008

DRAFT PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE Active Lifestyles Officer **POST NUMBER:**
DIRECTORATE Operations (Cultural Services) **DATE:** February 2008

Requirements		Weighting	Assessment Method
Skills	Conduct individual consultations and assessments	3	A,I,T
	Supervise and train fitness instructors who will assist with referrals	2	A, I
	Use IT and a range of software packages	2	A,Q
Experience	Significant post qualification experience in the delivery of exercise referral programmes	3	A, I, T
	Experience of working within an exercise referral environment	3	A, I
	Experience of delivering a range of specific exercise/physical; activity sessions including gym based exercise, circuit training and health walks	3	A, I, Q
	Experience of working with individuals with risk factors/medical conditions	3	A, I, Q
Personal Qualities	Communicate verbally and in writing to patients/clients, staff. Stakeholders and partners	3	I, A,T
	Motivate and support behavioral change related to physical activity and other related lifestyles	3	I, A, T
Specific Job Requirements	A clear understanding of the assessment, referral and intervention process	3	A, I
	Ability to collect, collate, evaluate and present data in order to monitor the post outcomes	2	A, I, Q
	Manage appropriate budgets in relation to the service	2	A,I
Qualifications	Degree in Sport and Exercise Science	2	Q, A
	Advanced qualification in Exercise and Fitness	3	A, Q
	Exercise Referral qualification recognised by the Register of Exercise Professionals	3	A, Q
	First Aid	3	A, Q
	BACR IV Exercise Instructor qualification	2	A, Q

<i>Weighting</i>	<p>3 – Essential for the successful performance of the job</p> <p>2 – Desirable but can be achieved through on the job training or experience</p> <p>1 – Useful but not essential for successful performance of the job</p>
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Assessment

Application Form
References

A
R

Interview
Presentation

I
P

Tests
Evidence of Qualifications

T
Q

