

Collaboration: Health & Wellbeing Gains for City Housing Tenants



Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

The health benefits of regular physical activity, healthy eating and community connectedness are well documented. A group that stands out as traditionally hard to reach and engage with in terms of recreation and wellbeing are city council tenants.

Over two years ago, Sport Wellington partnered with the Wellington City Council Housing Business Unit to take health education and community recreation directly to the Council's housing tenants. The programme is based on the Healthy Lifestyles Programme (HLP) model run by Sport Wellington and modified specifically to suit City Housing tenants based on tenant and staff feedback.

The eight week HLP includes weekly activity, education and sharing sessions based in Council's community facilities across various housing sites. The programme focuses on healthy cooking, cooking on a budget as well as trialling recreation and physical activity opportunities that are available in the tenants' locale and budget. It seeks to reduce the barriers to exercise, and re-engage participants in realistic and achievable options.



Cooking skills in action

This partnership model enables the best utilisation of everyone's skills and services to better help those in need – Sport Wellington brings expert content knowledge and resources while Wellington City Council has the relationships with tenants and an understanding of their needs. The HLP is one of many initiatives run by City Housing's Community Action Programme (CAP) which aims to enable tenants to take part in decisions that affect them, join in activities to get to know their neighbours and improve their wellbeing. This programme recognises that social housing is an opportunity to promote health in broadest sense – social connections, activity and information.

To find out more please contact:

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There has been some great feedback and success stories from HLP participants:

- 'Before I joined I was always mad I don't understand why, but then when I joined this programme it took away all my anger'. The group encouraged me to continue even though some days my leg was sore I still made it and carried on' – Mary
- 'I have noticed I have lost weight, even though it's not a big loss I know I can do it will all the tools we have been given'.



Participants of the healthy living programme

Six months after the programme ends, everyone is followed up to see how they are getting on. The evaluation shows that there's been considerable health benefits but what success looks like to City Housing isn't always health indicators such as weight, blood pressure or muscle strength. The key way CAP measures change is through positive qualitative responses measured by their most significant change evaluation. The CAP team collects tenants' stories about a significant positive impact on their lives through participation in a CAP initiative. The outcomes described might be making new friends, a new sense of community belonging, overcoming barriers such as a disability to gain new skills and confidence, or learning new recreation activities. As a result evaluation is undertaken in a way that enables both organisations to show how the project has been successful.

"The key achievement is that we are re-engaging participants and providing opportunities for sport and physical activity as a pathway to improved community wellbeing."

What next?

- Regular HLP continuation at varying locations across Wellington city.
- Graduates provide peer support and motivation through the 'All Stars' monthly sessions facilitated by Community Action so tenants can continue their journey to wellness.
- Supporting tenants in varying locations to get involved in a local event such as Round the Bays with subsidised entry.

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