



# WellComm Active

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES ARE WELL COMMUNITIES

18 August, 2020

## Activating Community Health & Wellbeing in Cork

On the basis that Active Communities are well communities, *WellComm Active*, an important new health and wellbeing initiative that is being piloted across Cork, announced its Autumn activities schedule today.

There are five core community programmes aimed at helping individuals with exercise, weight management and healthy eating.

The idea is to promote healthier lifestyles by supporting and empowering people in their communities to manage their own health and wellness.

Modern healthcare globally is moving care into the community, to help people manage chronic illness themselves and to avoid hospital admissions, wherever possible, Priscilla Lynch, Head of Health & Wellbeing at Cork Kerry Community Healthcare explains.

“With an ageing population and growing waiting lists, we need to rethink the delivery of health services and bring care directly into communities. By actively engaging with people who need support, we improve their quality of life and give them tools to manage their health and wellbeing”.

Classes and one-to-one programmes have been developed which are suited to the general adult population. Older adults, inactive individuals and at-risk and vulnerable groups are most encouraged to participate, with referrals via GPs, hospitals and community health professionals.

### Community Classes

**Project WeightLoss** classes begin the week of September 21<sup>st</sup> in Castletownbere, Ballineen, Farranree and Bantry with five further locations soon to be confirmed.

The 12-week community-based weight management programme, developed by health and fitness professionals, is an opportunity for inactive and overweight people to experience a supervised and structured exercise regime, appropriate to their ability and needs. It supports lifelong behaviour change through participation, encouragement and education.

**Staying Fit for the Future** is also scheduled for the week beginning 28th September. It promotes healthy ageing with a physical activity programme to improve strength and balance in older adults so they remain steady on their feet. HSE physiotherapists are involved in the programme development which is delivered in local community facilities over 8 weekly sessions.

Confirmed locations for September include Ballinascorthy, Ballineen, Ballintotis, Bandon, Buttevant, Churchfield, Donoughmore, Fermoy, Kinsale, Middleton, and St. Finbarrs GAA in Togher and Union Hall, with up to a dozen more venues awaiting confirmation.

Individual tailor-made supports are also provided as part of *WellComm Active*. **Made2Move**, a one-to-one mentoring programme that can be done in any location, and this begins from September 23<sup>rd</sup> next.

Physically inactive people are supported by Move Mentors in becoming more active, developing exercise as a long-term habit. By the end of the 8-week programme, it is hoped participants can reach the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week on a regular basis.



The *Made2Move* programme was designed by the PE & Sports Science Department in University College Cork (UCC). After a successful pilot, the programme, which was shown to vastly improve overall health, is being rolled out across Cork through *WellComm Active*.

Good nutrition is the focus of **Healthy Food Made Easy** classes which start during the week of 26th October in Schull, Farranree, Cork city centre, Mallow, Dunmanway, Clonakilty and Inniscarra.

The 6-week nutrition education programme for adults has been developed by HSE community dietitians to promote healthy eating and build simple cookery skills. By improving the nutritional knowledge and eating habits of participants, the course can ultimately help diet related chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and cancer.

### Physical and Mental Wellbeing

The beauty of *WellComm Active* is that it is created for specific people with specific needs who wouldn't ordinarily access fitness services, says Eoin Kaar, *WellComm Active* Project Lead at the Cork Sports Partnership.

“We work with people who would be unable or unlikely to join gyms or sporting clubs. We help them incorporate useful exercise in their lives and improve their physical activity levels. Apart from physical change, mental health is also vastly improved when we support people in active wellness within their community”.

The launch of Cork's *WellComm Active* initiative was originally planned for April 2020. While Covid-19 limited the activities that could take place, online health and fitness programmes were organised, as well as telephone support lines with practical advice on nutrition and exercising safely.

Programme delivery will now be extended into the New Year, integrated across all 11 community healthcare networks in Cork.

*WellComm Active* is coordinated by Cork Sports Partnership (CSP), supported by Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH), and funded by the Department of Health under the Sláintecare Integration Fund.

UCC is a research partner on the community healthcare project, which aims to deliver evidence-based programmes proven to be both popular and effective. By ensuring all data on participation and outcomes is collected and assessed, *WellComm Active* will improve services in the community and help tackle significant health concerns.

Health professionals or interested participants can contact Eoin Kaar at *WellComm Active*: [wellcommactive@corksports.ie](mailto:wellcommactive@corksports.ie), or by telephone (021) 434-7096 or 086 1409 225.

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\*This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 140