

LIFESTYLE MATTERS

A RESEARCH STUDY FOR PEOPLE AGED 65 YEARS AND OVER

Aiming to improve wellbeing in later life

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The Universities of Sheffield and Bangor are carrying out a study to find out whether taking part in a programme called Lifestyle Matters can help older people maintain a healthy, happy and fulfilling life.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

As part of the study we need to be able to find out whether the Lifestyle Matters programme works. To do this we need people aged 65 years and over to help us with our research. The study has the support of your local health and council authorities. For more information about taking part yourself or suggesting this to others please use this leaflet and contact us with any queries you may have. We will be happy to answer your questions, whether you are interested in taking part, or if you are interested in recommending the programme to others.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME?

The main purpose of the Lifestyle Matters programme is to develop and maintain wellbeing through taking part in activities. This will be achieved through:

- A combination of support from other group members together with guided assistance from trained group facilitators.
- Skills and knowledge sharing between group members.
- Provision of information so that participants can make informed lifestyle choices.
- Encouragement and practical help to take part in activities that are of interest and relevance to participants
- Assistance with identifying strategies for dealing with life changes.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

- The programme involves small groups of 10-12 people meeting together with a facilitator in a local venue for a couple of hours each week over 4 months.
- There is also the opportunity for each participant to have a one-to-one monthly meeting with one of the group facilitators to work on personal goals.



A smaller Lifestyle Matters programme was conducted in Sheffield in 2004. Activities that people chose to get involved in included computing (at the local college), tai chi, aromatherapy, using public transport and dining out together to mention just a few.....

This is what participants said;

"I think the lifestyle group has brought me out more."

"Well I appreciated someone taking an interest in me, someone outside the family and outside normal friends. And your welfare, because that's what it boils down to, isn't it?"

"I would say that even the ones who were much quieter than me joined in and gave as much as everybody else did... this is what was good about the group – we all gelled"

Quotes from Mountain et al, *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* 2008 71(10).

Contact:

Katy Treherne, University of Sheffield | Tel: 0114 222 6383 | Email: k.treherne@sheffield.ac.uk
Lauren Powell, University of Sheffield | Tel: 0114 222 8275 | Email: l.a.powell@sheffield.ac.uk



WHAT HAPPENS IN THE RESEARCH STUDY?

If you or a person you know might be interested in getting involved one of the research team will make contact to arrange a visit.

At this visit the researcher will firstly ask some simple questions to check if the study is right for the person. Further information about the study will be provided and there will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions. If after discussion the person is still interested and the researcher agrees that taking part is appropriate they will be asked to sign a form to consent to participate. Finally the person will be asked to complete a small number of simple questionnaires about their physical and emotional wellbeing. Assistance with completing the questionnaires will be available if required.

Volunteers will then be randomly selected by a computer programme to enter one of two study groups. Volunteers in both groups will be asked to complete the same questionnaires and speak to a researcher at regular intervals over the next two years. Once the final questionnaires have been completed involvement in the study will finish but the research team will ensure that all volunteers receive the results of the study and are invited to any local events about it.

WHERE: We are recruiting from a number of communities so that each Lifestyle Matters group is held in a local and familiar venue

GETTING TO THE GROUP: We want to ensure groups are accessible so we will help individuals with this.

NO OBLIGATION: We can reassure those who take part that it is fine to leave the study at anytime without having to explain why

WILL ALL VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFESTYLE MATTERS PROGRAMME?

To find out whether the Lifestyle Matters programme works we will place people into two groups. One group will participate in the programme and the other group will be asked to continue with their normal life. The reason for this is that we will then be able to compare the two groups to see whether the Lifestyle Matters programme has made a difference. This means we can be sure that if people feel that their lives have improved, it is due to the programme.

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If you or a person you know is interested in taking part in the study there are several ways you can let us know:

- by completing and returning a response card
- by telephoning the study team directly using the telephone number at the end of this leaflet
- by emailing the study team using the email provided at the end of this leaflet

It is entirely up to you whether you wish to take part and if you decide not to you will not need to do anything, your decision will in no way affect the care you receive.

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