

USING BREAST CANCER NOW VOLUNTEERS TO DELIVER A LIFESTYLE INTERVENTION – EXPERIENCES FROM THE ACTWELL TRIAL

AUTHORS: AMY HICKMAN¹ HANNE BRUHN² SHAUN TREWEEK² AND ANNIE S. ANDERSON³
 1. BREAST CANCER NOW, 2. UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN, 3. UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE.

BACKGROUND

Most breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50. ActWELL was a randomised controlled trial that aimed to lower breast cancer risk by supporting women, of breast screening age, to make sustainable lifestyle changes (physical activity, diet and bodyweight) over 12 months. It was believed that partnerships with a health charity could potentially increase reach into local communities.

At least 23% of breast cancer cases in the UK could be preventable through making lifestyle changes.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Breast Cancer Now (BCN) recruited, managed, and co-ordinated a team of **volunteer lifestyle coaches**. Volunteers received training in the ActWELL intervention from the Research Team and BCN. The intervention was delivered in person at local leisure centres.

ACTWELL TRIAL DELIVERY



Women receiving ActWELL lost **1-5lbs more**



Women receiving ActWELL walked **more steps**

4 Leisure trusts supported the delivery of ActWELL providing spaces in 12 leisure centres.

ActWELL

Images courtesy of ActWELL

FINDINGS

BCN received **170** volunteer applications

66 received lifestyle coach training

45 Volunteer Lifestyle Coaches delivered the intervention

Volunteer retention was **68%**

VOLUNTEERS' PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS

- UNIVERSITY-STUDENT PUBLIC-HEALTH
- PROJECT-MANAGER EXERCISE-COACHING
- PHYSICAL-ACTIVITY CARER
- TEACHER VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING
- MOVE-MORE CHARITY-WORK MENTOR
- SUPPORT-WORKER
- MEDICAL GBT RETIRED EDUCATION
- NUTRITION WALK-LEADER COUNSELLOR
- BEHAVIOUR-CHANGE FITNESS-INSTRUCTOR
- GP HEALTH PSYCHOLOGIST
- NURSE HEALTH PROMOTION

VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 623 coaching sessions delivered
- 1,915 support telephone calls made
- On average each volunteer supported 7 participants
- 85% gained new skills or built on existing skills
- 100% of volunteers enjoyed the role
- 70% of volunteers increased their physical activity levels

"I FEEL THAT I HAVE MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE TO THE LIVES OF THE PARTICIPANTS I HAVE MET OVER THE COURSE OF THE TRIAL"

"IT'S BEEN BRILLIANT BEING PART OF THE TEAM AND YOU ACTUALLY FEEL QUITE PRIVILEGED TO BE PART OF THE JOURNEY THESE WOMEN ARE ON"

TAKE AWAY POINTS

There was a great deal of interest in this demanding role despite the involvement required.

The role attracted volunteers with the appropriate skills and experience.

The volunteers were committed to see the trial through to completion.

CONCLUSION

The ActWELL study was a successful collaboration between higher education institutions and the voluntary sector, showing that volunteers can deliver a lifestyle change programme in the community. Overall, this highlights the potential to address gaps in current public health efforts.

