

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services**

**Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee: 4 October 2006**

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**Subject: National Men's Health Week 2006 – Leisure Services**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report seeks to update the Committee on the successful involvement of Leisure Services in National Men's Health Week.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** National Men's Health Week (NMHW) runs each year in the week leading up to Father's Day and was first held in June 2002. Since then it has grown in size and impact, firmly establishing itself as a key part of the health improvement calendar. Each year NMHW focuses on a different area of policy relevant to men's health. Previous weeks have focused upon.

- Male health in general (2002)
- Men and sexual health (2003)
- Men and cancer (2004)
- Men and obesity (2005)

West Dunbartonshire Council's Leisure Services has supported NMHW in previous years via the provision of subsidised access to a range of activities.

#### **3. Main Issues**

##### **3.1 National Men's Health Week 2006**

The theme for NMHW 2006 was men and mental wellbeing. The literature NMHW scheme literature provided a great deal of information about the health issues involved including the following:-

- One in four people in Scotland will experience mental health problems at some point in their lives.
- Work-related stress affects about one in five workers (some five million people) and stress-related conditions are now the commonest reported cause of sickness absence.
- Improving access to services, creating healthy workplaces and improving mental and emotional well-being are part of the government's strategy to tackle mental health problems.

- Mental health has also been identified as an important issue at the pan-European level, as evidenced by the UK's and 51 other states' support for the WHO *Mental Health Declaration for Europe* (2005).

**3.2** NMHW 2006 sought to raise awareness of these and other issues and sought to promote a positive view of how the problems can be tackled by highlighting and encouraging good practice in a wide variety of settings including primary care, the workplace and the local community. It sought to signpost how health professionals and others working with men could seek to improve their health outcomes. A key aim was to demonstrate how men's emotional literacy, physical and mental wellbeing and resilience could be enhanced and increased.

**3.3** The benefits to individual men of improved mental wellbeing include:

- Simply feeling better.
- Improved relationships.
- Higher levels of achievement at work.
- Coping better with stress.
- Increased protection against mental illness.
- Better physical health.

**3.4** The role of exercise and increased physical activity in improving mental as well as physical health and well-being has long been recognised by health professionals. This year, to support the scheme, Leisure Services offered a number of free sessions including swimming, health suite, fitness assessments and inductions and selected sports hall activities at all three leisure centres.

**3.5** Vouchers for the activities were distributed by the NMHW organisers to a number of local community groups and organisations with an interest in men's health. Vouchers were also distributed directly from the three main centres.

**3.6** NMHW took place from 12 to the 16 of June 2006. The uptake of activities supporting the scheme is highlighted in the table below:-

	Swim & Health Suite	Fitness	Dryside
Meadow Centre	<b>141</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>
Play Drome	<b>134</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>
Vale Pool	<b>59</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>n/a</b>
	<b>334</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>38</b>

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

**4.1** None.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** Promotion of free activities during this event resulted in a small loss of income to Leisure Services however benefits gained in supporting this National Initiative include increased awareness of facilities amongst healthcare partners and the likelihood of new customers.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1** The NMHW organisers were pleased with the support that West Dunbartonshire provided to the scheme and were delighted with the level of participation within the centres during the week. Leisure Services would hope that through supporting the scheme they have made a contribution to improving health in West Dunbartonshire and may have gained some new customers in the process.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note the successful contribution which the Leisure Services Section has made to National Men's Health Week 2006.**

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**Date: 1 September 2006**

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**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All

**Appendix:** None