



The Healthy Living Alliance
together making the most of life

What is The Healthy Living Alliance?

Healthy Living Centres in England have formed The Healthy Living Alliance, working through 9 Regional Networks. The aims of the Alliance include:

- Raising awareness of HLCs through engagement with national, regional and local government bodies and statutory authorities;
- Sharing good practice and developing the skills and experience of healthy living initiatives;
- Stimulating effective partnerships with other professional, statutory and voluntary bodies working on similar issues.

What are Healthy Living Centres?

The 257 HLCs in England received grants from the Big Lottery Fund to deliver innovative solutions that address health and social inequalities for people in the most deprived areas, through:

- An extensive range of services addressing the wider determinants of health and tackling disadvantage;
- Local solutions to local problems, actively engaging the community in their development;
- Accessing hard to reach areas; 161 of the 257 (63%) HLCs in England operate in the 88 NRF funding areas;
- Prevention of ill-health and maintenance of long-term good health, improving quality of life and well-being.





HLCs in practice

HLCs vary in size and scope, from building-based community hubs to 'virtual' outreach projects, across all boundaries of age, race, ethnicity and gender.

HLCs provide an enormous range of services to their many users. There are centres that work closely with local partners to focus on mental health, obesity or coronary heart disease. Other HLCs target specific constituencies that are harder to reach, such as BME groups, older people, or dispersed rural populations. Some HLCs place their emphasis on children and young adults, tackling obesity, preventing the uptake of smoking and encouraging healthy eating.

Other services HLCs deliver include:

- Training for the unemployed
- Substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation
- Women's health
- Men's sexual health
- Support for the disabled
- Housing assistance
- Access to Primary Care
- Support and advice for asylum seekers
- Physical exercise classes, nutrition and diet advice
- Advocacy services





What makes HLCs special?

In identifying need and designing services for those whom the statutory bodies find it hardest to reach, HLCs are:

- Flexible to the realities of local contexts, responsive to needs expressed by individuals and communities, giving real choice;
- Committed to provide services that are holistic, acknowledging the links between mental, physical and social well-being.

In service delivery, HLCs have:

- Shown that relatively inexpensive measures can relieve pressure on statutory services, and save the need for more costly interventions;
- Focused on ill-health prevention and social reablement aimed at practical outcomes and long-term behavioural change;
- Cultivated self-sustaining *independence* within the community, not continuing *dependence*.

In relating to the wider delivery landscape HLCs have:

- Become a bridge between statutory sector priorities and their realisation with individuals and communities;
- Initiated and facilitated inter-agency agreement and partnership working on the delivery of services.

What impact have HLCs had?

External evaluations of HLCs have noted clear evidence of:

- Behavioural change amongst users, with dramatic transformations in mood and actions relating to health;
- Increased feelings of well-being; against traditional pictures of decline, there are improvements in overall health;
- Nurturing of social capital through the development of community networks and civic engagement.



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HLCs are helping the Government meet its priorities

There is a clear alignment in what HLCs deliver and the Department of Health's aims in the 'Choosing Health' White Paper.

- **Nationally**, in meetings between the Alliance and other government departments, HLC work has been matched to their priorities and further discussions are in hand.
- **Regionally**, the 9 HLC Regional Networks are forging strong links with Regional Government Offices.
- **Locally**, HLCs are engaging with Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and others through participation in the development of Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic and Delivery Plans.

Future plans for the Healthy Living Alliance

- **Professional development and sustainability**
HLCs will build on Accenture's Development & Support Programme, which creates a strong performance management base for HLCs and toolkits for sustainability.
- **Expansion of the HLC approach**
The HLC approach will be extended to similar initiatives, expanding the reach of the approach and Alliance membership.
- **Shaping the future**
The Alliance will work with government and HLCs, embedding HLC work into the restructuring and delivery mechanisms of health, social care and community regeneration.

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