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PRESS RELEASE

Volunteer health mentors celebrate amazing progress

VOLUNTEERS at Blackpool Victoria Hospital have been praised for their efforts to help motivate local people to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Members of the Volunteer Health Mentor project celebrated the group's first anniversary this week with news that they had engaged with more than 2,000 people to give information and support about making steps towards leading a healthier lifestyle.

More than 20 volunteers are currently working at the hospital and have been trained to provide information to patients, staff and visitors about stopping smoking, sensible alcohol intake, improving diet and increasing physical activity.

The volunteers were this week praised at a celebration to mark their first anniversary.

Nick Grimshaw, Director of HR and OD at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "I can't believe the progress made by this small group of volunteers. Their efforts to help improve the lives of others has been inspiring.

"I really admire the group because they are giving up their own time to use their skills and experience to help others."

Rachel Swindells, Public Health Facilitator at the Trust added: "To have made such an impact so quickly is absolutely amazing and the success of the project is totally down to the quality of the people volunteering. They are always thinking of ways to improve the service we offer and are amazingly dedicated.

"The aim is to make further strides and have volunteer health mentors in more areas of the hospitals and we would love to be able to engage with over 10,000 people in a year in the future."

Nicola Worrall, Health Education Practitioner, said: "The Health Mentor project has been an exciting opportunity to offering support and encouragement to people who want to make improvements to their health and wellbeing.

“If someone wants to find out more information about stopping smoking, reducing alcohol intake, increasing physical activity or eating more healthily, the Health Mentors are available to assist them by providing tips on ways to make a change. As well as giving access to leaflets they are also able to signpost and refer people to services in the community.”

Volunteer Val Butler, from St Annes, said she was delighted to be part of the scheme.

She said: “I am retired now and I wanted to do something fulfilling. I am keen on being fit and healthy myself and I like to meet people so this seemed a perfect role for me. I have met some lovely people and have really enjoyed it.”

If you would like to find out more about the scheme please contact Nicola Worrall on 01253 306480 or 303967.



Caption: Volunteer Health Mentors and staff from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.



Caption: Volunteer Health Mentor Val Butler with her certificate.

Notes to Editors

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