

James Bogue
Active & Healthy People Programme Lead

Lead Areas of responsibility:

- * Sport England funded – Live & Move programme
- * ECC Physical Activity Strategy
- * Communities Programme
- * Wellbeing Exeter
- * COVID response – Exeter Community Wellbeing

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to contribute towards the evidence gathering regarding future working regarding homelessness. I welcome the role of the task group, the focus on homelessness and would like to explore further the role the Active & Healthy People Team in supporting intervention and prevention strategies through collaborative working

Role within Homelessness

Whilst there is not a specific strategy or priority to work on the homelessness agenda within the Active & Healthy People strategy and programme, there are a number of areas of our work that impact indirectly on the health prevention and community wellbeing agenda that can support the work. There is also some emerging work within our Live and Move programme piloting specific interventions regarding homeless people accessing leisure services.

Our wide network of partners within the local VCSE network that help deliver our key strategic programmes (listed above) work more closely and directly with homeless people

There has been a degree of work through historic projects within our Community Grants programme, for example supporting foodbanks, mutual aid groups and individual wellbeing hardship funds through the Exeter Community Wellbeing programme delivered through COVID

Our overarching role regarding health prevention and community wellbeing to support residents leading complex lives includes:

- A strong delivery partner within Wellbeing Exeter including CoLab and Exeter City FC Community Trust who offer bespoke programmes and projects supporting homeless people
- The Wellbeing Exeter coordination (and some Community Connectors) being based at CoLab hub, networking with a range of partners supporting homeless people
- GP referrals to Wellbeing Exeter for residents experiencing poor mental wellbeing, social isolation and a range of mental health challenges
- Community Builders supporting residents to drive social action in their local neighbourhoods and providing meaningful activities for those experiencing loneliness and isolation

Sport England Live and Move programme

We are establishing pilot work between the CoLab Welcome Team (Laura Greenhill) and Exeter Leisure (Emma Kessie) to offer memberships to homeless people and support our

leisure offer to overcome barriers to enable people with complex lives to enjoy leisure activities.

Following our meeting a couple of months ago we have managed to source some funding to do a pilot project to allow 6 people to access the gym for 3 months ... the plan is to pay a month in full for them and then for them to contribute towards month 2 and 3. They will get support from Mark, our community ambassador, if they require it to attend and budget. We will also like to access swim vouchers for those interested to access the swimming pool. "Laura Greenhill, CoLab"

Historically we have worked with Exeter City Community Trust, at varying times working with Julian House and Gabriel House to develop programmes of physical activity for residents with a focus on informal walking, Couch to 5k groups. Whilst currently dormant, this work could be re-established through the Live & Move programme and our local 'Community Physical Activity Organiser' team hosted by Exeter City FC Community Trust

An 'Opportunity Club' delivered by ECFC meets weekly:

What is Opportunity club?

Opportunity Club is a unique project in Exeter which uses football and activity to engage people who may be struggling with mental health issues, homeless or vulnerable.

The sessions are run in partnership with homeless and other support organisations, including the Amber Foundation, RISE, Julian House, CoLab and the YMCA. Previous participants have gone on to become settled and find employment thanks to the constructive environment of the Opportunity Club.

Where & When?

The club takes place at Wonford Sports Centre every Tuesday, when teams of players take part in football sessions. The sessions run from 12pm – 1pm

Recent News

Read about our recent appearance on [ITV News](#)

Exeter City FC Community Trust have also asked to include their new housing service as part of the evidence review...details below:

Our specialist housing service has been set up to help and support vulnerable people who are at risk of being homeless or have experienced homelessness to have a new start and be provided with the opportunity to live in their own home and prepare for independent living.

The houses in the scheme are the responsibility of the social landlord Dawson Housing, a housing association which provides supported living accommodation for vulnerable people and families across the country. They are very experienced in this field and take pride in the houses they provide and continue to maintain.

The pandemic has left many people in turmoil with their housing situation. Through our activities and support programmes at Exeter City Community Trust we witnessed first-hand during lockdown how many people were struggling to maintain tenancies.

Through our Supported Housing programme, we provide people with a place of safety and support them to work towards independence. We do this by helping residents to maintain their tenancy, understand budgeting and provide help with general life skills to enable them to move forward. Our overall plan is to support people to take on their own tenancies and sustain employment.

We will be providing intensive support to our residents, who come from a wide range of ages and backgrounds, including veterans adjusting to civilian life, single parents, people fleeing domestic violence, care leavers, people facing financial hardship and those at risk of homelessness. The location of each property will be central to our tenant selection.

How to refer

The majority of our residents are referred through Exeter City Council, although some people do self-refer. Referrals are also considered from other housing associations and support services.

You can ask to be referred by Exeter City Council, or you can contact us directly. For more information about how to refer into our service, please email housing.admin@ecfc.co.uk

What do we do?

Much of our provision is focused on assisting our residents to develop the skills to maintain a tenancy. A personalised plan is created for every individual, which helps them to sustain a tenancy and enables them to contribute to the community and to society in a positive way. They will be provided with help and guidance in areas such as budget management, job hunting and healthy living advice.

What are the houses like?

The homes have been refurbished to a high standard by specialist developer Pathway Homes Group, and all properties either meet or exceed building regulation standards. Every person we support has their own room with en-suite facilities, and a main shared and fully equipped kitchen.

Come and work or volunteer for us

We are building a strong team. If you are compassionate and committed to making a difference to the lives of other people, please contact us on the email address below to find out about our latest vacancies.

For more information

For more information about this programme, please email housing.admin@ecfc.co.uk

Data & Evidence

Each year we produce a detailed analysis of physical activity and wellbeing levels in Exeter through our Live & Move Programme. This year we have surveyed over 2000 residents in our most deprived wards (target Lower Super Output Areas). Once completed and reviewed we would like to submit the survey results and analysis to the task and finish group as part of this work.

Exeter Community Initiatives are currently compiling a 'State of the Sector' report analysing the VCSE response post covid and issues and challenges faced by the sector as we embark on the cost of living crisis. Once completed and reviewed we would like to submit the survey results and analysis to the task and finish group as part of this work.

We are also consulting with Community Centres and Associations across the city to understand their aspirations and challenges around providing 'warm spaces' across the city

Summary

Although the Active & Healthy People Team are not explicitly prioritising and resourcing work for the homelessness agenda through key strategic programmes such as Live & Move and Wellbeing Exeter... we have extensive voluntary sector networks and partnerships with organisations working in this space.

We would be happy to continue conversations around how our work to support community wellbeing and active lifestyles can support homeless people and help improve lives through our work

The emerging CoLab, Wellbeing Exeter, Exeter Leisure partnership to support homeless people to access and enjoy leisure services will be piloted and we will grow this offer based on the learning from the pilot

I trust this a helpful input to your process

James Bogue