

St. Helens Healthy Schools Programme.



The Healthy Schools Programme is a joint initiative between the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health - which promotes a whole school / whole child approach to health.

The specific objectives of the St. Helen's Healthy Schools programme, in Merseyside, are to:

- Reduce obesity
- Increase activity levels
- Encourage healthy lifestyles in school age children.
- Support children and young people in developing healthy behaviors
- Help to raise pupil achievement
- Help to reduce health inequalities
- Help promote social inclusion

Family Health

The Healthy School Programme has been extended to include and embrace family health. Although the target population of the project is school age children, it is acknowledged that children cannot make changes alone. The lifestyle advisor (Healthy Schools) travels around schools in the St. Helens area, offering full health checks to parents.

The health checks include:

- Measurements of height and Weight for Body Mass Index
- Blood pressure
- Body fat percentage
- Lung capacity
- Cholesterol
- Glucose

The Reports of these health checks for parents are produced using **Fitech V5 web enabled software**.

The lifestyle advisor explains these results in detail to the parents and highlights any implications that the results indicate,

referenced against Norms for age and gender, giving appropriate health improvement advice. They are produced in an easy to follow format, with resultant graphs either appearing in Green (OK); Amber (Caution – your Health professional will be able to advise you); or Red (Attention – you may need to refer to your GP or at least undertake a life changing approach).

To correlate these results, in order to report back to St. Helens Healthy Schools, the Lifestyle Advisor relies on Fitech's V5 Data Analysis Module, which spools information from the Lifestyle Review, Physical Module (Fitness assessing) and Medical Module (cardiac risk and cholesterol) to produce a Group Data Report. From this information you can look at data as a whole, such as the percentage of subjects that are classified as obese or who have high cholesterol levels.

The initial Fitech V5 Training for the Healthy Schools Programme was undertaken onsite by Fitech's Head Trainer, Mark Newns, who has instructed on Fitech software for over 14 years. He spent a day with the team demonstrating V5 and going through the theoretical aspects of health screening within the community.

Methodology:

The Lifestyle Advisor uses portable testing equipment to conduct the assessment at the school. The CardioChek PA analyzer, provided by Fitech, is used to give results for cholesterol and glucose within a couple of minutes.

The results are input back at her office and the reports are given to the parents after the initial appointment, usually sent home with the children. Some parents/ grandparents don't like the clinical wording (e.g. Obese), although results were explained at the time.

Any results outside of the normal range are identified and then GP's are informed and the subject is

Case Study

recommended to make an appointment to see their doctor. So far in this project, over 200 parents and over 60 Teaching staff have been assessed, with 60 review appointments already booked.

Conclusion:

Fitech V5 is proving invaluable in helping the project produce understandable Reports for each Parent and then being able to produce a complete whole school report, without having to input any further data. Feedback has been generally positive with parents acknowledging a need for change and agreeing to a follow up appointment.

“A healthy school promotes the health and well-being of its pupils and staff through a well-planned, taught curriculum in a physical and emotional environment that promotes learning and healthy lifestyle choices.”

Objectives

To provide a software system that:

- Assists St Helens Council deliver the Healthy Schools Programme
- Manages Health and Fitness assessment testing
- Manages and reports health data
- Provides the team with protocols, norms and information for reference
- Provides easily understood Reports explaining their health and wellbeing to the parents



Fitech Solutions

- Fitech V5 Web Application
- Physical (includes Lifestyle review); Medical and Group Data Analysis Modules
- On line tutorials
- Full online support
- CardioChek PA Cholesterol Machine
- Fitech Health Check Equipment
- Bespoke training onsite

This project is part of the *Engaging Parents in Healthy Schools* Programme. Funded by the IDEa and Department of Health, the programme is trialing a range of support projects in twenty-one local authorities which will develop, test and validate approaches to involving parents. Together, they will develop a package of programmes and resources which can be used by other local authorities in their work with families. Materials and evaluation from the programme will be available in the summer of 2010.

