

## **CLAHRC CP supported project promotes healthier lifestyles among people with Intellectual Disabilities (IDs)**

A project, led by Community Nurses and a Food Hygiene and Safety Manager, with service user involvement and support from the CLAHRC CP Adult Theme, has adapted a mainstream health improvement programme (CHIP) for people with IDs and their support workers.

As a group, people with IDs are at increased risk of overweight and obesity, and its problems, but often have very limited access to mainstream programmes, accessed through primary care. In collaboration with a service user, the resources, teaching methods, and session frequency of a mainstream health improvement programme (CHIP) were adapted for people with IDs. After six sessions, held in two separate locations, all 16 participants with IDs, all of whom had BMIs > 26 (range: 30.30 – 48.60) had improved knowledge of healthier lifestyles, albeit from a very low baseline, and had lost weight or inches from their waistlines. Concrete aids, such as portion plates and pedometers, were both effective and acceptable.

Some of the participants' support workers took part in a separate, parallel programme. Disappointingly, they were found to have little knowledge of, or skills in promoting, healthier lifestyles for people with IDs. With further amendments, the adaptations could easily be incorporated into the mainstream version to facilitate access by people with IDs. The findings suggested that support workers need considerably more training to enable them to support men and women with IDs in having a better diet and taking more exercise. There may be similar implications for other groups, such as people with enduring mental health need, who receive paid support.

This project was led by Cheryl Smith and Sallyanne Broughton (Community Nurses, Cambridgeshire Learning Disability Partnership and CPFT) and Judy Rowe (Food Safety and Hygiene Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council). Sallyanne, Cheryl and Judy were Highly Recommended in the Best Service or Project category of the CPFT Good Practice Awards 2011. The project was carried out with the support of the CLAHRC Adult Theme, in which Sallyanne works part-time as a Practitioner Researcher.

