

Report on the Benefits Provided through Hydrotherapy Services at Sandgate Hydrotherapy Pool

1. Background

Sandgate Hydrotherapy Pool was built in 1977 through donations received through public subscription. The fundraising was led by members of Westmorland Mencap, who have continued their support for the Pool ever since, more latterly through the Trustees of South Lakeland Hydrotherapy Trust.

During the intervening years the Pool has been operated by Cumbria County Council. The Pool now resides within the People Directorate, with budgetary responsibility resting with the South Lakeland Local Committee.

Due to the unique nature of the services provided at the Pool, it has been possible, over many years to secure partnership funding arrangements with a number of key stakeholders, these being Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group and their newly emerging structures, South Lakeland District Council, and Kendal Town Council. Further additional fundraising has been co-ordinated on an on-going basis by the South Lakeland Hydrotherapy Trust, which has led to significant improvements being made to the Pool building, and an increase in the level of service provided to Pool users.

The Pool offers a unique service to the population of south Cumbria and north Lancashire, the benefits of hydrotherapy have been well known for many years. The Pool offers these benefits to swimmers and non-swimmers alike in a supportive, non-competitive environment that affords privacy. Key benefits for Pool users include the ability to: -

- Move more easily
- Relax your body
- Regain fitness following an operation or accident
- Ease pain
- Perform gentle all body, non-weight bearing exercises
- Improve circulation and breathing
- Build self confidence

All of which contribute to the following key health and wellbeing outcomes: -

- Maintenance of individual health and wellbeing
- Reducing re-presenting occurrences at GP surgeries and physiotherapy departments
- Quicker rehabilitation following surgery or trauma to allow for early return to work
- On-going pain relief for chronic conditions
- Increased opportunities for a return to independent living following periods of hospitalisation
- Increased social interactions improving mental health and rates of on-going compliance

The Pool has a number of key objectives which include: -

- To provide therapy at an affordable cost
- To provide a Pool heated to 94°F (10°F higher than a public swimming pool)
- To provide personal/specialist session
- To facilitate confidence building and emotional support
- To provide an environment for social interaction
- To maintain and improve the Pool facilities

- To provide an accessible and supported environment for the disabled and their families

2. Need for the Report

The need to demonstrate the impact the services provided at the Pool have on the lives of clients has for some time been required. This is especially true in the current climate of financial austerity, when the long term funders of the Pool mentioned earlier, are reviewing their investments carefully, and where structures, particularly in the area of health services are changing at a rapid rate.

Each year, an Annual Report is produced, which looks at successes and achievements from the previous year, and highlights a number of case studies, which demonstrate the importance of the services provided at the pool, and the difference it is having on the lives of Pool clients. Whilst these case studies provide a great insight into the difference the Pool makes to a small number of individuals, it is felt that they do not demonstrate the broader impact the service has on the lives of the 500 or so clients using the Pool at any one time.

To develop this, it was agreed that a more in depth survey of pool users was required, seeking the views of Pool users as to their feelings of general wellbeing and levels of activity as a result of regular usage of the Pool. Given the limited capacity available at the Pool, a simple system has been adopted using the recognised Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile (MYMOP) approach. An initial mass survey was undertaken back in 2016, which captured some extremely positive results and the Pool now survey new clients on an on-going basis to demonstrate the impact of the services provided to these clients.

3. The MYMOP Approach

MYMOP is a patient-generated, or individualised, outcome questionnaire. It is problem-specific but includes general wellbeing. It is applicable to all patients who present with symptoms, and these can be physical, emotional or social. It is brief and simple to administer.

On the first occasion the questionnaire is completed within the consultation, or with some confidential help. The patient chooses one or two symptoms that they are seeking help with, and that they consider to be the most important. They also choose an activity of daily living that is limited or prevented by this problem. These choices are written down in the patient's own words and the patient scores them for severity over the past week on a seven-point scale. Lastly wellbeing is scored on a similar scale. On follow-up questionnaires the wording of the previously chosen items is unchanged.

Several published studies have shown that MYMOP is practical, reliable and sensitive to change. These studies have involved patients who have received treatment from both orthodox and complementary practitioners for a range of problems.

Copies of the MYMOP Forms used in this study are detailed as Appendix A.

4. Methodology of the Study

The study is undertaken during a 12 week period, and involves surveying new pool users from a cross-section of groups, these being casual sessions, Arthritis Care Group, Parkinson's Disease Group, and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. The survey is added to constantly throughout the year which builds the picture over a period of time.

Given the random approach taken to the survey, the individual diagnoses are not specified. We have simply used the 12 week period to generate a snapshot for each individual user at that moment in time.

The focus of the study was to look at four main questions, these being: -

As a result of using the services provided at the Pool during the period: -

- Has the severity of primary symptoms improved?
- Has the severity of secondary symptoms improved?
- Has the ability to perform an identified activity improved?
- Has the feeling of general wellbeing improved?

This approach will be continued moving forward, focussing on new pool users, as well as doing some specific studies for individual user groups with similar diagnoses, such as Multiple Sclerosis or Parkinson’s disease.

To provide a more rounded view of the service over a period of time, new survey responses are added to those previously received, so that an on-going accumulative process is in place.

5. Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are summarised below in table form, and have been aggregated as a whole, and then grouped by the severity of the primary symptom.

Table 1 looks at clients reporting to have the highest rate of severity of symptom 1, these are scored at either 5 or 6 on the MYMOP scale.

(Table 1)

| | Symptom 1 | | Symptom 2 | | Activity | | General Wellbeing | |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 |
| Number of Individuals | 147 | 147 | 129 | 129 | 147 | 147 | 147 | 147 |
| Average Severity Score | 2.0 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 1.6 | 1.0 |

The table indicates that as a result of regular hydrotherapy pool usage, the surveyed clients reported: -

- For the severity of symptom 1, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.8 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 5 points improvement.
- For the severity of symptom 2, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.5 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 4 points improvement.
- For the ability to perform an identified activity, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.9 points improvement and the range was from -2 points deterioration to 6 points improvement.
- For the reported general wellbeing, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.6 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 6 points improvement.

Table 2 looks at clients reporting to have a moderate rate of severity of symptom 1, these are scored at either 3 or 4 on the MYMOP scale.

(Table 2)

| | Symptom 1 | | Symptom 2 | | Activity | | General Wellbeing | |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 |
| Number of Individuals | 147 | 147 | 129 | 129 | 147 | 147 | 147 | 147 |
| Average Severity Score | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 1.0 |

The table indicates that as a result of regular hydrotherapy pool usage, the surveyed clients reported: -

- For the severity of symptom 1, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.6 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 4 points improvement.
- For the severity of symptom 2, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.6 points improvement and the range was from -3 points deterioration to 5 points improvement.
- For the ability to perform an identified activity, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.7 points improvement and the range was from -2 points deterioration to 4 points improvement.
- For the reported general wellbeing, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 0.7 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 6 points improvement.

Table 3 aggregates all clients involved in the survey.

(Table 3)

| | Symptom 1 | | Symptom 2 | | Activity | | General Wellbeing | |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey 1 | Survey 2 |
| Number of Individuals | 147 | 147 | 129 | 129 | 147 | 147 | 147 | 147 |
| Average Severity Score | 4.0 | 2.7 | 3.8 | 2.6 | 4.0 | 2.4 | 3.4 | 2.1 |

The table indicates that as a result of regular hydrotherapy pool usage, the surveyed clients reported: -

- For the severity of symptom 1, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 1.3 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 5 points improvement.
- For the severity of symptom 2, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 1.2 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 4 points improvement.
- For the ability to perform an identified activity, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 1.6 points improvement and the range was from -2 points deterioration to 6 points improvement.
- For the reported general wellbeing, the average change in MYMOP profile score was 1.3 points improvement and the range was from -1 points deterioration to 6 points improvement.

6. Annual Referrals

As mentioned previously, the Pool caters for around 500 clients each week, all of whom are referred into the service, some of which are long term users of the pool, to maintain or keep at bay an on-going disability or condition, whilst many clients use the pool for a much shorter period of time, to

aid improvement in a condition through either gentle therapeutic exercise, or a more tailored package of support.

To support this report, a further analysis of the referrals received over the previous 12 month period has been undertaken, and the source of the referral identified. This information, when looked at in conjunction with the financial contribution made by the Clinical Commissioning Group under the current funding arrangements is also explored in more detail below.

Table 2 provides details of the source of the referrals into the Pool during the last 12 month period. (Table 2)

| Referral Source | No. |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|
| James Cochrane Kendal | 35 |
| Captain French Kendal | 35 |
| Station House Kendal | 28 |
| Risedale Surgery Barrow | 1 |
| Ulverston Health Centre | 1 |
| Haverthwaite Surgery | 3 |
| Cartmel Practice | 1 |
| Pennisula Medical Practice Grange over Sands | 2 |
| Nutwood Medical Practice Grange over Sands | 4 |
| Windermere & Bowness Practice | 2 |
| Central Lakes Group Ambleside/Hawkshead | 1 |
| St Marys Surgery Windermere & Staveley | 3 |
| Coniston Surgery | 1 |
| Arnside Surgery | 2 |
| Stoneliagh Milnthorpe Surgery | 5 |
| Park View Milnthorpe Surgery | 5 |
| Ash Trees Carnforth Surgery | 7 |
| Bentham Medical Practice | 4 |
| Sedbergh Medical Practice | 2 |
| CTH Practice Carlisle | 1 |
| Upper Eden Practice Kirkby Stephen | 1 |
| Morecambe Bay Health (not Physio Department) | 6 |
| Blackpool Fylde Coast Hospital | 1 |
| Private Physiotherapists | 6 |
| Total | 157 |
| | |
| Westmorland General Hospital Physio | 44 |
| | |
| Total new pool users 2018/19 | 201 |

7. Summary

The evaluation of the perceived benefits of the service provided at the Pool using the MYMOP surveys would seem to make a compelling case to ensure that this valuable service is continued.

Clearly, the MYMOP results reported proved the service was extremely beneficial in not only improving the primary and secondary symptoms, but also of increasing levels of activity, and promoted higher levels of general wellbeing.

Given the change in focus of funding bodies such as Clinical Commissioning Groups towards a more preventative role, and of keeping individuals living independently in their own homes, in improving social cohesion, reducing isolation, and improving mental wellbeing, the results demonstrated in this report would support a continued investment in the services at the Pool.

Looking at value for money, a simple calculation using the number of annual referrals made to the pool from primary care establishments (201) versus the current annual financial contribution of the CCG (£15k) would indicate a very modest cost per head of £74.62.

It is also worth noting the total annual operating costs of the pool equates to some £120K. Given that the pool caters for around 500 individuals each year, the cost per head of pool user per year is around £240.

Taking this point further, the true cost of the 201 new referrals during the last year is in the region of £48,240 (201 x £240). Clearly the funding received currently through the CCG is only around 31% of the actual costs of these referrals.

Although a relatively small amount of funding, the impact of the CCG not funding the Pool would present considerable challenges to both individuals from south Cumbria and north Lancashire in continuing to maintain their own health and wellbeing through accessing services at the pool, but also to the operators of the pool who value the partnership funding previously provided to help balance the books of this important preventative service.

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