

Making Every Contact Count Toolkit

Briefing Paper

Making Every Contact Count in Wessex – Supporting People to Lead Healthier Lives

Making Every Contact Count is about making the most of the opportunities to make a difference to people's health and wellbeing. By supporting people to make changes to their lifestyles it is possible to prevent ill-health, improve health and reduce health inequalities.

What is Making Every Contact Count?

Making Every Contact Count lets organisations and people develop a different way of working with people to address health and wellbeing. Telling people what to do is not the most effective way to help them change. Making Every Contact Count is about altering how we interact with people through having Healthy Conversations and learning how to spot opportunities to talk to people about their wellbeing.

Making Every Contact Count training allows workforces to:

- Take a holistic people-centred approach to service delivery
- Deliver 'very brief' or 'brief' evidence-based interventions for lifestyle behavioural change; the core elements of which are stopping smoking, increasing physical activity, reducing alcohol consumption, maintaining a healthy weight and diet and promoting mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- Be competent and confident to deliver this intervention; and
- Know about local services and how to signpost people to help them to access them, where appropriate.

Why is it important?

Too many people die too early from diseases and illnesses that are largely avoidable. The most common and biggest killer diseases being cancer, heart disease, stroke, respiratory and liver disease¹. Many are directly related to how we live our lives, what we eat and drink, whether we smoke, and how active we really are. By changing these, sometimes only a little bit, we can not only feel much better in ourselves, but have a more satisfying life and be healthy for longer. The expectation that some people have of it being inevitable that we get bigger as we get older and should expect to need drugs for high blood pressure and heart disease is not necessarily the right one.

How does it work?

Health Education England Wessex Team have piloted, evaluated and published a report on the approach. Health Education England – Wessex Making Every Contact Count supports the implementation of Making Every Contact Count is available through:

- The Wessex Making Every Contact Count Implementation Toolkit
- The Wessex Making Every Contact Count Train-the-Trainer Programme
- The Wessex Making Every Contact Count Network
- Guiding you to develop a Making Every Contact Count lead for your organisation
- Providing on-going advice and guidance on Making Every Contact Count implementation.

1. Living Well for Longer, National Support for Local Action to Reduce Premature Avoidable Mortality, Department of Health, January 2014.

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Implementation Toolkit

There is a toolkit of information and resources available for organisations and people wanting to find out more about Making Every Contact Count. This provides guidance and support on what can be done to make sure Making Every Contact Count is taken forward as successfully as possible. It includes sections on the steps of implementation from getting senior leadership buy-in to training and reviewing and evaluating the programme.

Train-the-Trainer

To fully embed Making Every Contact Count so that it is effective and sustainable the training is implemented through a Train-the-Trainer approach. This means organisations identify suitable people (from the teams who have been selected to implement Making Every Contact Count) to champion the intervention and to become trainers to deliver the RSPH accredited Healthy Conversation Skills¹ programme to their colleagues, thereby cascading the skills throughout the organisation.

The Making Every Contact Count training for frontline staff includes eLearning and face-to-face sessions:

- Knowledge training – Making Every Contact Count is introduced via eLearning to make sure everyone has the basic awareness of essential underpinning knowledge, such as what is important and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
- Skills and confidence training – 2 x half-day face-to-face Healthy Conversation Skills training sessions; trainees learn how to ask Open Discovery Questions (ODQs, questions that usually start with ‘what’ and ‘how’) rather than make suggestions, give information or tell people what they should do. By doing this, trainees will be able to support people to explore their worlds and help them to identify barriers to change and find their own solutions; thus emphasising the power of listening.
- Preparing staff to Make Every Contact Count – local knowledge and where to signpost people to, resources and recording a Making Every Contact Count activity, will be developed locally to contextualise for setting.
- On-going support and refresher training; via e-learning and support from organisations.

If you are a senior leader, team leader or work for an organisation:

The Health Education England - Wessex Team School of Public Health is available to offer guidance and support. For further information please contact MECC@wessex.hee.nhs.uk.

(If there is a local authority contact to coordinate Making Every Contact Count in each area add details)

1. Healthy Conversation Skills was developed by University of Southampton, Medical Research Council, NIHR Biomedical Research Centre in Nutrition and Accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)