



Strong Women Partnership

What is it?

The 'Strong Women' course was designed as an entry point to engage women in an appealing, fun and useful programme designed to equip them with the life skills, self-confidence, resilience and decision-making capabilities not only to deal with their day-to-day lives, but also to allow them to move on to further opportunities whether this be education, training, further support groups, voluntary roles or even into work.

As learners become more self-aware they will be able to increase their personal resilience, mental and physical well-being.

The aims of the project are themed under the following areas:

- Strengthening self-confidence
- Transferable skills
- Building resilience
- Opportunity to connect more easily
- Noticing our difference
- Goals for the future

Who's involved?

Open Doors 2 and Occupostive – course facilitators and neuro-linguistic practitioners, Knutsford Children's Centre and Early Help (Now managed by Oakenclough children centre), Cheshire East Lifelong Learning, The Welcome, Local Area Partnership (Cheshire East Council), NHS health visitors.

What contribution does Great Places make?

It gives staff time, manages the Adult Learning Contract which means admin such as self-assessment, one-to-one tutors and in-house teaching and learning observations. It also chairs the steering group and helps to recruit learners.

What's been achieved?

Women have 'moved on' to:

- Volunteering (in the Children's Centre, running groups, sitting on parents forums), at The Welcome Café, with Cheshire East's 'Everybody' team – sports and play volunteering
- English, Maths and ICT courses with Macclesfield College or Great Places
- Work readiness course with Barclays
- Work placements with Barclays

- Complete NVQs in Customer Service
- Formal adult learning eg accountancy courses
- Family learning eg 'Supporting a Child with Autism' or joined support groups
- Employment
- 'Stronger Women' course

Other achievements for the course:

- Received an 'outstanding' teaching and learning observation
- One learner achieved Great Places Young Tenant of the Year Award at the Community Stars Awards 2014
- One learner received an Adult Learner Awards Learner of the Year award, June 2014
- Highlighted by Ofsted as an example of outstanding practice in May 2014
- Several job outcomes
- One learner achieved Great Places Young Tenant of the Year Award at the Community Stars Awards 2014 and another learner achieved this award in 2015
- One learner achieved Great Places Community Volunteer Award 2016 and Knutsford Town Council Civic Award 2017
- Constituted group - The Secret Garden of Springfields won Great Places Community Star Award 2016

How's it helping residents?

Learner's comments

Person A "A few weeks before doing Strong Women I was diagnosed with post natal depression. I had been struggling with post natal depression for about a year before going to the doctors and getting help.

"I was struggling with day to day stuff, I could not even decide what to have for tea. I hated leaving my flat so avoided going out, avoiding friends and family. I felt anxious and down most days, my confidence was at an all time low. I could not think about my future, it felt so dark and gloomy."

Person B "Strong Women helped me build my confidence. I can now talk to a big group of people I don't know, with confidence. This is something I could not have done before doing the course, even before my depression. Doing Strong Women has taught me so much about myself."

What happens after Strong Women?

Women are encouraged to attend the signposting session where multiple agencies are present to help them choose their 'next steps' may this be volunteering, further education or employment. Progression tracking also happens at 3 and 6 months. The course 'Stronger Women' is also offered as an alternative:

Stronger Women builds on the skills developed during Strong Women project. It introduces the learners to the importance of personal values and the impact of limiting beliefs. The course continues to build on the understanding of emotional intelligence, enabling women to develop resilient relationships within their families and the wider community.

The network of 'Stronger Women' will develop a more powerful voice in the community to influence local policies.