

NEWS RELEASE

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Award winning Olympic gold medallist steps up to promote mental well-being

SALLY Gunnell, OBE will be among a line up of true super heroes as she steps up to support the Living Well in the West Midlands portfolio in Birmingham.

The nation's most popular sportswoman of our time will be lining up alongside superheroes including Superman and Batman along with several members working for the Living Well in the West Midlands projects to show that everyone can achieve mental well being through exercise.

Living Well in the West Midlands portfolio led by the West Midlands Regional Assembly received £6.8 million through the Big Lottery Fund last year.

Olwen Dutton, chief executive of the West Midlands Regional Assembly said: "It is truly wonderful to have such a high-profile gold award winning athlete take part in this important portfolio, Living Well in the West Midlands. We hope today's events will make people more aware of the link between the importance of healthy eating, physical activity and good mental health.

"We intend our 31 projects running throughout the Region to encourage people to take part in exercise and healthy eating that can help improve their physical and mental well being no matter what the age. I think someone of Sally Gunnell's status supporting our superheroes and our project beneficiaries shows you don't have to be a superhero to take part in exercising your mind and body."

Sally Gunnell said: "I am pleased to be here today supporting the Living Well in the West Midlands portfolio. The event today emphasises the importance surrounding the

need to tackle mental well being and support those that are helping others combat this issue.”

Delegates attending the event include Carl Chinn, born and bred Brummie and well known BBC radio presenter who also writes a weekly local history column in the Birmingham Evening Mail.

In addition to the many celebrities supporting this portfolio will be John Taylor, Big Lottery Fund Head of West Midlands Region.

He said: “The Big Lottery Fund has a long tradition of supporting health projects and we are delighted to be able to contribute a further £6.8 million to support activity across the West Midlands. Growing obesity levels, inactivity and the rising rates of depression, stress and anxiety in today’s society means that keeping fit and living healthy lifestyles has become more and more important.

The excellent range of projects in the West Midlands will support people to make key changes to their lifestyles, helping them to become fitter, healthier and happier as a result. The initiatives stretch right across the region and many are being delivered by voluntary groups, allowing communities to be closely involved in their planning and delivery.”

This event highlights one of the several projects in the Region which will be demonstrating proactive steps in improving the lifestyles of those in the Region with an array of sporting activities showing how best mental well being can be achieved.

It will be held on Monday 4 February at the Banqueting Suite at the council house in Victoria Square.

For more information about projects taking place near you please see attached document.

ENDS

For further enquiries please contact Jay Rana, Press Officer, j.rana@wmra.gov.uk or 0121 245 0181.

Footnotes

1. Living Well in the West Midlands launch will take place on Monday 4 February from 1.30pm until 3.30pm at the Banqueting Suite, Victoria Square, Birmingham.
2. Living Well in the West Midlands’ consists of 31 projects in total which are delivered to citizens across the Region, including Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands.

3. Projects vary from support and guidance for private, public and voluntary sector employees which will help promote positive mental health to setting up initiatives to reduce the isolation suffered by older people within our communities. For a detailed list of all projects please see attachment.
4. The West Midlands Regional Assembly are project managing this portfolio.
5. Regional Health Partnership led on the bid together with the West Midlands Regional Assembly.
6. The Region has launched its first West Midlands Regional Health and Well-Being Strategy with the vision of: "Maintaining, enhancing improving and protecting the health and well being of people in the West Midlands Region and to reduce health inequalities by 2020 within environmental limits, so as not to compromise healthy life for future generations.
7. Sally Gunnell, aged 42 started out in athletics with the Essex Ladies club as an accomplished long jumper and pentathlete before taking part in sprints and hurdling and is the only woman to have held the European, World, Commonwealth and Olympic 400 metre hurdles title at the same time.

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