

Meet the genie



HEALTH trainer Khadija Khan describes herself as a genie in a bottle - giving people the answers to their health problems and questions.

"We mediate between the person and the services," she explains. "We bring the NHS to people's doorsteps."

"If people want to stop smoking, if they want to go for a healthy diet, we refer them to the right department. Whatever you need, we are always ready to give you."

"It really works. It means people don't need to go to their GP."

Based in Cheetham Hill, Khadija covers the north Manchester area. She is one of 15 trainers currently employed across the city to work closely with individuals who want to adopt a healthier lifestyle, but are unsure how to go about it.

North Manchester was one of the first areas in the UK to launch the scheme in June 2005 - and it has been a great success, with people like Khadija using their local knowledge of the area and its services to bring the information to people who need it.

"Our job is to promote the wellbeing of people through one to one sessions, but sometimes we do community groups," she says.

"In terms of counselling, we can't advise anybody - we just listen to them. It is very



Khadija Khan is Cheetham Hill's health trainer. (s)

much about bringing people to their own conclusions, and is completely confidential."

Khadija works with an extremely diverse mix of people, including many Arabian and Asian clients.

She has provided help and support to all sorts of people, including a lady who wanted to lose weight after having a baby and a diabetic man who needed to diet.

Khadija said: "Now he has referred his wife to me - people often get their family members involved too."

"Sometimes, in traditional Arabic communities, husbands don't involve their wives too much - but three quarters of the men I have seen refer

their wives to me as well, which is a big thing that people have trust in my service. People feel quite relaxed with me."

Khadija adds that a positive attitude - as well as exercise and a better diet - is crucial for her clients to become healthier.

"I always look at their interests, and how they can please themselves. I try to cheer people up and encourage them to look at the positive side of life."

"When you see a person growing, it's really exciting."

For information about the service or to find your local health trainer, contact Aurora Robb on 0161 861 2902, email Aurora.robb@manchester.nhs.uk, or visit www.mphds.org

District News

Newton Heath

Healthy in Bloom



Friends of Gaskell Street Park are hoping for more success after being awarded a Green Flag last year. (s)

NEWTON Heath is well known for its blooms.

And this summer should be no different after events to encourage people to put up hanging baskets outside their homes - including the latest one at Gaskell Street park.

"A lot of vouchers were collected by the treasurer for hanging baskets and people came out and made up their own," said Friends group chairman Karen Brookes.

"It will help with In Bloom and get peo-

ple out in the park, keep people interested in what's going on.

"It went really well."

Plants are also being installed in boxes at the park, along with wood carvings.

The Friends of Gaskell Street Park have also applied to renew their Green Flag award and are waiting to hear if they have been successful.

Newton Heath has previously been crowned North West In Bloom winner and represented the region at Britain in Bloom last year.

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