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£4 million cash injection to improve health

Efforts to improve physical and mental well-being in the North East received a £4 million cash injection from the Big Lottery Fund today (Jul 18).

The national charity announced that the region had been successful with its bid for funding from the Well-being Programme.

Regional project board chair Tracey Sharp said: "This is great news for the North East, which has some of the worst physical and mental health in the country.

"The sooner we can begin to turn this money into tangible health benefits the better."

The bid – called Passionate about Health and Well-being – was drawn up after extensive consultation with over 100 North East organisations.

The amount given by the Big Lottery Fund was £4.05m, which will be spent on 32 projects over a period of three years.

Regional director of public health Dr Stephen Singleton welcomed the extra cash, which will complement NHS funding.

He said: "Although we are making good progress in a number of areas – particularly with the treatment of heart problems and cancer – we have the worst health of any region in England.

"People living in the North East experience high levels of preventable disease and premature death from heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease and other causes.

"We would benefit more than any other region from improvements in mental health and prevention of disease associated with poor diet and physical inactivity. This is a further positive development on the public health front following the introduction of smokefree legislation earlier this month."

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