



Celebrating the milestone of losing one stone in weight are Operation Transformation participants Leona Conalty, Doris Gibson, Maria Duffy, Paul Reilly, Caroline Cullivan and Patrick Keogh. The group are pictured here with RehabCare staff including Bernard McVeigh, Community Services Manager (far left) and Mary Kennedy, Programmes Facilitator (second left).

Operation Transformation

They've lost a whopping 29 and a half stone (or 189 kilos) since the start of the year, but the healthy bunch who attend RehabCare in Cavan aren't finished yet!

THE MEN and women who attend the RehabCare resource centre in Cavan have enthusiastically embraced a fitness and healthy eating programme that has resulted in huge changes in lifestyles, eating habits and general wellbeing.

"We started our very own 'Operation Transformation' in January to coincide with the RTÉ programme by the same name. But, while the television programme ended after a few weeks, the crew here just kept going and now there's no stopping them!" explains Mary Kennedy, Programme Facilitator with RehabCare in Cavan.

Staff at the centre introduced the programme, which won an award at this year's Biomnis Health Innovation Awards, to encourage healthier lifestyles among those who attend the centre. "There has been a real shift in attitudes among those who attend the centre," says Mary. "They've learned all about the food pyramid and portion sizes and this is being reflected in the food they eat. We're now enjoying

healthier lunches – butter, cream and salt have been banished and we're tucking into wraps, quiches and healthy chicken stir-fries."

"What's more, we're a lot more active now in the centre. We do a half-hour fitness session each day and a longer session on a Wednesday, which is our Operation Transformation day, when we also weigh-in and have talks on all elements of a healthy lifestyle."

As part of the programme, the group has taken part in a number of activities in the local community, including a 5km charity run spearheaded by local sporting star, long distance athlete, Catherina McKiernan. But, it is a centre-based activity that has proven most popular among the service users.

"Zumba is my favourite activity," says Doris Gibson, who attends the centre. "It is great fun, everyone gets involved! I've lost over a stone in weight since I started the programme at the centre. I've lots more energy and my clothes are fitting me better!"

The service users are also bringing their new-found knowledge and enthusiasm home with them. "My sister's husband loves his ice cream cones but I told him that he shouldn't be eating ice cream because it's fattening. He should be having smoothies or an ice lolly instead," says Doris. "I don't think he was impressed!"

Doris' weight loss was one of many recognised at a special ceremony in the resource centre, with presentations being made to those who had lost half a stone and also a stone in weight. And, with their weight continuing to fall, there are bound to be more presentations to the healthy living crew in the future.

"We're so proud of everything that the service users have achieved," says Bernard McVeigh, Community Services Manager with RehabCare in Cavan. "But they are really putting us staff members to shame. We're afraid to reach for a biscuit these days in case we're spotted!" ■