




By Laura Everett-Coles


I visited the Ideal Health Exhibition event in Sturminster Newton this weekend.

I found myself thinking about the play on words, mention Ideal Home and people instantly think of cushions, throws and posh stuff for their houses but Ideal Health is open to different views. To me it's trying to be the healthiest I can be given the circumstances of my life.

 The event filled two halls in The Exchange with a wide mix of stalls. As well as the NHS, [Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service](#) and [Livewell Dorset](#) there were volunteer, charity and community groups with offers to help support physical and mental health.

I managed to have a health MOT, find out about what [Blackmore Vale Surgery](#) were doing, learn about a befriending scheme, find support to protect my mental health and chat to [Walking for Health](#) leaders all in a space of five metres.

It took me two hours to visit all the stalls and the phrase I kept hearing from visitors was "I never knew about this" as they discovered what was actually available in their locality.

 The thing that struck me was that no one needed to be lonely or isolated if they didn't want to, there was so much help right there in their community.

Some exhibitors told me it was hard to find customers for their free services and networking at events like this helped them meet other organisations and share ideas to help reach more people.

I drove home feeling inspired and thinking about how much laughter and enthusiasm I'd seen. Perhaps Ideal Home and Ideal Health aren't so very different after all. Our bodies are our homes and it's time we started investing in them for our best future.

Next time I go to find a cushion for my house I'm going to plan a nice walk to buy it!