



Teenagers lose weight by gaining confidence

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THE success of Cumbria's Wellspring, the UK's first teen weight-loss camp, has been receiving national recognition as the subject of an ITV1 documentary.

Fat Teens in Love, based on life last summer at the Wellspring UK camp at Newby Bridge, has highlighted the problem of childhood obesity in Britain.

The camp, based at the National YMCA Centre, was chosen by a documentary team from Two Four Broadcast, due to its success over the past three years helping youngsters fight obesity.

The programme followed four teenagers as they embarked on a summer which will change their lives as they shed pounds and life-long bad habits to lose weight. The camp, runs for a total of eight weeks, during which time the group did seven hours of outdoor exercise a day and followed a low fat diet. But the main mission of the camp is to crack the damaging self-image ruining the youngsters' lives.

The teenagers who signed up to the camp told the programme that they struggled to meet members of the opposite sex who are interested in them – and they believe it's down to their weight.

Seventeen year-old Kaytee Symes is 5ft 3ins and weighs 12 stone 4lbs. She told the programme: "I don't know if my personality matches the way I look.

"Because I'm quite bubbly, an open person and the way I look is quite sort of big and ugly and I just don't think I match that. I don't think boys see me at all."

Deb Sweeney Whitmore, executive director of Wellspring UK, said that cognitive behavioural therapy is at the heart of Wellspring UK's success.

"It's not just about the youngsters being obese because they eat too much – it's the reason why they eat too much that we need to get to. It's all about changing behaviours to achieve the weight loss and carrying that through to their adult life."

Joining Kaytee at the camp were 18 year-old Bobby, 17 year-old Leah and 16-year-old Max. All the teens lost a huge amount of weight during their time at camp and leave with new-found confidence.