

Healthwatch Bristol Open meeting: talking about health

Thursday 8 September 10-12 at BAWA

35 people were in attendance.

Ellen Devine, Healthwatch Bristol Project Coordinator, introduced the meeting and Healthwatch with a short presentation.

What is Healthwatch?

- Strong, independent voice for children, young people and adults in health and social care
- Delivered by The Care Forum
- Working with seldom heard communities
- Volunteers
- Part of Healthwatch England

Healthwatch Bristol is about working in partnership with various voluntary sector organisations and statutory services who are the experts in their field. Supporting the public to have their say and sharing knowledge.

Healthwatch functions – helping individuals

- Listen to and record your feedback on health and social care services
- Signpost you to next steps
- Inform you about advocacy support

Healthwatch functions – improving services

- Identify themes in feedback you send us
- Work with service providers and commissioners to enable service improvement based on what service users want
- Work with voluntary and community sector groups to champion patient and public voice

Healthwatch Bristol Wellbeing Show

- Second Tuesday of every month 3-4pm
- Listen online at www.bcfmradio.com
- Listen to recent shows at: bcfmradio.com/wellbeing
- If anyone would like their organisations to feature on the radio show please get in touch.

Healthwatch Bristol's next quarter topic is **Age, health and wellbeing**. If anyone is involved with a group focusing on older people of young people, please get in touch as we want to hear from you.

Cancer prevention naming the 'c' word.

Over the last few months Healthwatch Bristol has been engaging with cultural and faith groups asking questions about screening and awareness of cancer. Summaries of the engagement sessions are published on the Healthwatch Bristol website and findings will be in the quarterly report. W: <http://bit.ly/2cNdoFI>

Lianne Straus from Public Health England gave a presentation about Cancer screening. The presentation covered:

- different NHS cancer screening programmes;
- what is available and who does and does not access;
- what works in getting people to access screening;
- what are the barriers to access screening.

Discussion and questions

Summary:

- There was concern that due to the time between screening tests, cancers that develop between screening tests may be missed and that, therefore, screening was not effective.
- There was confusion between different screening test and why screening was done for some cancers, but not all.
- Commentators stated that they felt tests for prostate cancer and testicular cancer were not accurate or effective and that this deterred them from taking part in screening programmes in general.
- There was support for more opportunities for people to talk about cancer screening, ask questions and dispel myths. Commentators felt that talking about cancer screening with groups of men in places that men are already going to would be a good way to engage men.
- It was suggested that more awareness work could be done in schools, colleges and universities to encourage young women to attend cervical screening tests.

Overview of comments:

Q. Some cancers are very fast growing so time lag between screening seems to be long?

A. Screening intervals are based on the time frame for developing a cancer and the idea to screen healthy people.

Q. How do you reach out to men as it's really difficult to get them to attend medical appointments?

Commentator said she struggled to persuade her husband to seek medical advice or go to screening test.

A. There have been trials inviting husbands and wives to screenings with each other.

Healthwatch Bristol did a project with SPAN (Single Parents Action Network) last quarter with a small group of single fathers which showed that the men were aware of screening options and of signs and symptoms of cancer, but, in general, did not follow up this awareness by visiting their doctor W: <http://bit.ly/2bfaBCP>
Another way men could be targeted is by going to where they already are e.g. one local GP practice went to a football club and offered health checks which was very popular.

Also another Healthwatch has done a project with men by visiting Wetherspoons.
W: <http://bit.ly/2dtCuY8>

Q. Commentator said that they had done some research into cancer testing and it raised lots of questions for them around the accuracy of the tests. The commentator said that this sort of uncertainty around whether the tests actually work puts men off taking part in screening tests or going to their doctors. In particular there are lots of concerns over the accuracy of the PSA test.

A. PSA not a screening test in the same way Breast, Bowel or cervical screening programmes are. Screening programmes are designed to screen healthy people who are not showing symptoms of cancer, whereas PSA is for men who are maybe showing symptoms.

Q. In Wales, they screen for cervical cancer from a younger age than in England. Why?

A. Wales did have an earlier age for screening but if screening is done too early, it can lead to over diagnosis. Wales is increasing the age again.

Comments:

- One attendee talked about how their GP surgery made them aware of the PSA test and the result can be that you have a high risk but then went down the route of various biopsies only to find there was nothing wrong. This caused him a lot of worry and deterred him from other 'investigations'. It was felt more people need to have these discussions with their GP or options to discuss cancer and myths about cancer tests, as any negative experiences will put people off all tests.
- When will testicular screening and prostate screening be developed? And why are these questions not addressed when people do attend an appointment. It feels like as men we are second class as the screening programmes aren't in place for us. Once one person was tested in a golf club and diagnosed the whole of the golf club went forward who had previously ignored the letters.
- Why not do more in the adverts breaks of TV in the evening? This Morning does a lot. There needs to be more about promotion and awareness raising. [Healthwatch Bristol shared information about the Cancer Research UK roadshow coming to Bristol in October. W: www.cancerresearchuk.org]

- There was concern around lung cancer is there is website which is reliable and leaflets. Cancer research UK and NHS stop smoking services.
- The poor take up from young women for cervical screening could be improved by doing more with schools and colleges. It would start the conversation with young girls and then they might take up screening offers once they're 25 years old.
- Cancer screening information could be displayed in GPs, but also in non-medical places such as libraries. There need to be discussion groups as well as otherwise people won't be motivated to pick up the leaflets!

Mental wellbeing starting conversations

Lucy from Freedom Of Mind Festival gave a update on the festival.

- Set up by young people, but Freedom of Mind is for everyone.
- Freedom of Mind will help start conversation to reduce stigma, education and raise awareness and create change.
- During Freedom of Mind week (30 September – 10 October) there will be a host of events which people can attend and lots of activity on social media.
- Freedom of Mind Festival includes a conference. The conference is for anyone in the South West so anyone can sign up.
- Freedom of Mind is all about the need to know how to be mentally healthy. When talking about mental health people often use illness words, but we need to be thinking about what it means to be mentally healthy.
- Freedom of Mind is all about 'conversation, education and change' in mental health.

W: <http://freedomofmind.org.uk/>

Comments from attendees following Lucy's presentation:

- So good to hear that it affects everyone, so long the 1 in 4 status stated which is a lie. We all have mental and sometimes struggle and do things to get over it without realising it.
- Did a similar thing in East of England and have to be aware of safeguarding. Need to bring mental and physical together as everyone has a brain and a body and quite often if you have a physical illness it would impact mental health.
- Communication is not working as it used to and digital communications is a cause to the problem.
- Off the Record developed a Resilience Lab. W: <http://www.otrbristol.org.uk/resilience-lab/what-is-resilience/>
- As parents we need to accept computers are around and need to know how to understand it and the effects it can have.
- Younger children often don't have the chance to talk about things.
- One of the key things Freedom of Mind are looking to the future is about what are the key ages they should work with.

Link age

Sally from Link Age gave an update on their work. Sally also had a stand with information.

- Link Age is a charity supporting older people to get out, be active and socialise.
- Over last year Link Age has partnered with Macmillan as the recommendations after cancer treatment now is about getting out. They have a taster token scheme to support people to try new activities.

W: <http://www.linkagebristol.org.uk/article/out-now-free-taster-tokens.aspx>

The meeting was closed with opportunities for attendees to network, have further conversations and take part in the Healthwatch Bristol 'what service do you use?' activity. Notes from those conversations and activities are given below.

Urgent care and what service do you use?

Healthwatch Bristol is investigating people's knowledge of services and what makes people choose one service over another.

The scenario was posed "You wake up on Sunday morning and notice that you have a rash over your chest, arms and upper legs. You also have a temperature". People were given four options to choose between: visiting a pharmacy, calling 111, going to A&E or attending a Minor Injury Unit.

The option with the most votes was calling 111. However other suggestions were also made such as doing nothing, self care and calling a friend or family member.

Discussion was had concerning if a child was involved then it maybe that they went straight to A&E and also one participant was Deaf and she felt her only option was A&E as they are the only ones who she would be able to communicate with.

Several participants also asked what a Minor Injury Unit was and where are they in Bristol.

Other comments from the event included:

- Now that we are living longer [services] have got to think about extending all tests. They accept that 70s are now the old 60s so we ought to be thinking about extending programs of health checks.
- There seems to be a gap in projects which include single parents bringing up babies and young children alone. Often they feel isolated and not sure of themselves and have lost friendships groups.
- When a person does attend a screening test, give them a crib sheet on how to talk to other people and encourage them to attend screening too.

Next Healthwatch Bristol Open Meeting:

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 13 December 2-4pm venue and agenda will be confirmed.

Equalities monitoring

Not all participants completed the equalities forms and not all the questions were answered.

Ethnicity: White British 3 British Asian 1

Gender: Female 11 Male 5 Transgender 0 prefer not to say 1

Age: under 18 19-25 2 26-39 4 40-50 1 51-64 2

65 or over 6 prefer not to say 1

Sexual orientation: Lesbian or Gay 1 Bisexual 0 Heterosexual 13 prefer not to say 2

Do you consider yourself to have a disability/disabilities: Yes 2 No 14
prefer not to say 1

Faith: Yes 10 No 5 prefer not to say 2

Are you a carer: Yes 2 No 14 prefer not to say 1

Your marriage or civil partnership status: never married or registered in a civil partnership married

Tell Us Your Story...

Healthwatch Bristol want to hear from you about your experiences so that we can tell services your needs to create the best local services.



Text us - text bris followed by your message to: 07860 021 603



Email us at: info@healthwatchbristol.co.uk



Call us: 0117 2690400



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Or visit our website to see more at: www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk