

## Macmillan Cancer Support and Healthwatch Lancashire On Tour

Event 2 of 3: Understanding views on cancer and cancer services from Fylde Community Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Friends Group.

A collaborative event by Macmillan Cancer Support and local Healthwatch



## Introduction

Macmillan Cancer Support has teamed up with Healthwatch Lancashire to deliver a series of interactive events which will give seldom-heard groups the opportunity to discuss their views on cancer, which is estimated that more than one in three people will develop at some point in their lifetime.

This report collates the findings from the second of three Macmillan Cancer Support and Healthwatch Lancashire events which took place at the Burlington in St Annes on Wednesday 16th March with members of the Fylde Community Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Friends Group taking part in the activity.

This project is a collaborative project by Macmillan Cancer Support, Healthwatch Lancashire, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen and Healthwatch Blackpool with six events planned to take place in Lancashire.

## Methodology

A 90 minute workshop was delivered by AFTA Thought, a drama-based training company, who encouraged the group to share their views on cancer and cancer services.

Scenarios, which had been developed from real life stories provided by Macmillan Cancer Support, were presented to the group by professional actors covering issues relating to spotting the signs of cancer, diagnosis and attitudes to cancer.

Activities within the workshop were designed to encourage participants to share their views on the following questions:

- Do they feel listened to by health professionals?
- How can more people can be encouraged to have their say on health and social care?



**Pictured above:** The group discussed how they feel about cancer services in Lancashire.



**Pictured above:** The workshop aimed to gather views and opinions from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community.



**Pictured above:** Representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire, Macmillan Cancer Support, AFTA Thought and members of the Fylde Community LGBT Friends Group.

## What you said...

### 1. We asked members of the group to share their views about people's perceptions of cancer and cancer services

- The group felt that specific concerns for the group related to cervical and prostate testing. The group felt that testing is not widely offered. GPs do not always consider the views of the LGBT community.
- The group said clinics carrying out prostate tests are usually male orientated and females can feel out of place and embarrassed.

### Participants views and comments... (quotes)

"I would rather have a male doctor than cancer."

"My GP didn't take into consideration a family history of cancer."

"Some hospitals operate a separate clinic for prostate cancer. If you are trans it can create problems."

"If you are trans, screening cervical cancer is hard."

"Some people are so frightened about cancer they don't want to talk about it."

"Young people may Google their condition and I wouldn't recommend using Google."

## What you said...

### 2. We asked members of the group to share their views about health professionals and their experiences.

Amongst a facilitated subgroup of four participants, the following findings were gathered:

- Two people shared an experience of family members being dismissed with tablets by their GP's and subsequently dying because serious symptoms had been ignored. Generally, everyone was fairly or well satisfied with their current GP practice.
- Three people had a choice of doctor, male or female and felt they were treated with respect and understanding.

### Participants views and comments... (quotes)

"GP's are seen as a 'handymen' and not specialists in any area."

"It is one's own responsibility to take an interest in their own health, this can come down to an individual's knowledge, sometimes people do they know who to ask for."

"I would only go back to a GP when things become considerably worse, or would just go to A&E."

"I need to help my doctor to help me as I have a better understanding of my own body and health."

"Familiarity breeds contempt, sometimes seeing the same GP can have a negative impact, things can be missed. Seeing a different GP means they look at things differently, may pick up things or look at things with a fresh pair of eyes."

"Online systems are very useful, can book two weeks in advance."

"I try and help my doctor to help me."

"I would rather have any doctor than have cancer. I can't choose which doctor I go to the appointment on-line system is excellent. At my practice I have been allocated the main GP and he has meetings with the other GPs to discuss cases. I think this is excellent I have built up a good relationship with my doctor. My doctor is friendly and asks about my partner and family."

"I want to be treated as an individual and a human being. Not everyone knows they can change their GP or ask for a second opinion."

"Can't fault my doctors when I revisited for a family appointment with my partner."

"At Blackpool Victoria Hospital I was invited to Bowel Screening which was very good."

"A locum GP referred me to a clinic at Royal Preston Hospital. It was a very good experience. I was given pain patches."

"Certain GPs have problems with homosexuality because of their religious beliefs."

"Certain GPs are very abrupt, so now I won't see them."

"I wouldn't feel embarrassed about going to a GP."

"I was kept up to date when my partner had a heart attack. Staff were very nice and did not bring in religious views."

"I feel relaxed about going to health services."

"I'm being dismissed."

"GP's are getting bad press."

"As patients we have a responsibility to write down symptoms."

"GPs treat us as people and aren't glued to the screens."

"Our experiences aren't as bad as they have been painted in the public eye."

"Our surgery asks for feedback about how they can improve."

"The relationship with your GP is built up over time and your own confidence can affect how effective your appointment is."

"There should be an option of a female or male doctor."

"I am put off by seeing a doctor who sees homosexuality as against his own religion."

"Any age of GP can ask the wrong questions. LGBT people have issues that aren't recognised by GPs."

"I demand acceptance as a human. I request acceptance as a woman."

"Some people may have felt embarrassed when explaining gender history at urinary clinics."

"I fear that people don't want to face cancer, this makes early diagnosis difficult."



**Website:** [www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk)

**Email:** [info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk)

**Twitter:** [@HW\\_Lancashire](https://twitter.com/HW_Lancashire)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/lancshealthwatch](https://facebook.com/lancshealthwatch)