

Macmillan Cancer Support and Healthwatch Lancashire On Tour

Event 3 of 3: Understanding views on cancer and cancer services from a Seniors Together In Rossendale group

A collaborative event by Macmillan Cancer Support and local Healthwatch

April 2016



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 final of three Macmillan Cancer Support and Healthwatch Lancashire events which took place at Futures Park in Rossendale on 21st March with members of the Seniors Together In Rossendale 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:

- What are your views and experiences relating to health professionals?
- What are your views and perceptions of cancer and cancer services?
- What do Macmillan Cancer Support and health professionals need to do to reach more people?

13 people took part in the workshop.



Pictured above: The workshop was facilitated by drama-based training organisation AFTA Thought



Pictured above: Participants undertook activities to raise their awareness of the roles of local Healthwatch organisations and Macmillan Cancer Support.



Pictured above: Healthwatch Lancashire and Macmillan Cancer Support staff with members of the Seniors Together In Rossendale Group.

What you said...

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

Participants views and comments... (quotes)

"I wasn't aware that you could get support from Macmillan."

"Smoking has only been promoted as a cause of cancer over the past couple of decades."

"People are often in denial and do not even share with their families that they have cancer, in my experience."

"People still do not want to talk about cancer - it is seen as infectious."

"Seeing information (about cancer) in writing means more to people."

"I know a number of people who have died of cancer and one didn't tell their family which I think is very selfish."

"A friend was fobbed off for a long time before tests were done."

"A friend who went every month with a lump in her breast was told it was hormonal only and died of breast cancer later."

"My son had a lump in his testicle and monitored it and felt listened to."

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

Participants views and comments... (quotes)

"Not seeing the same doctor affects treatment and repeat prescriptions for pain relief for everyone, it can be dangerous."

"I was advised by doctor to exercise for sciatica. Turned out to be a misdiagnosis. Second doctor sent me for a scan and I needed to pay private for time wasting."

"Doctors can be too free with antibiotics."

"Not knowing what to say in the appointment can be an issue."

"There was a time delay with my hospital appointment but I felt that I was listened to."

"It's good to see different doctors as they may change treatment whereas old ones just continue the treatment you are having even if it is not working."

"Pharmacies do a good job; they ask more about how I'm feeling."

"My GP did every test there was, we couldn't fault the service."

"My surgery is very good."

"In my surgery you can't get past the receptionist."

"I always have a good service because I select the GPs that I trust. There is one doctor I will never see."

"The practice GPs have different specialities."

"I never had a problem with my GP."

"Sometimes you get a better diagnosis from nurse practitioners."

"I've had a poor experience when I have not seen my own doctor and seen locums instead."

"When speaking to GPs and health professionals you need to be bolshy to get your point across - some people just do not articulate."

"I recently went to see my doctor and was not taken too seriously and they thought that I hardly needed to go."

"I never understand why people need to see the same doctor. I'm happy to see any doctor."

"Some people are reluctant to see doctors who are not their own."

"I've had good experiences at my GP practice and as a result I am much more likely to go again."

"I hadn't been to my doctor for decades until recently. Now they have funny screens and check ins - if you don't know the system then it's difficult."

"Appointments are difficult - I would happily wait for longer to spend more time with the doctor. They need more time with patients but I know this won't change."

"In Rawtenstall it is not clear for people where they should go when they have injuries or are ill."

"I had a yearly check up. I was expecting it to be with the doctor but it was with a nurse. I didn't mind but it should have been made clear."

3. We asked participants to share their views on how they feel more people can be encouraged to have their say on health and care where they live.

Participants views and comments... (quotes)

"Come to places like Masscroft Community Centre to speak to people."

"Macmillan need to project what they do better."

"Go into communities and promote what they do."

"Come to places in communities to speak to groups."

"I wasn't aware of the earlier support that Macmillan offers."

"Macmillan product needs to be sold - needs extending into communities to show people can get support - promote the good work."

"If someone doesn't want the help from services such as Macmillan there is nothing you can do."

"If Macmillan nurses are there at the point of diagnosis it can really make a difference but I know that is difficult."



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