

Health Survey in Barrow, Friday 20th March 2009

Venue: Entrance to Barrow market

22 Questionnaires completed, of which 8 were male, 14 female

Age range:

Up to 16 = 3 (2 friends joined in discussion)

16 to 30 =4 (2 friends joined in discussion)

30 to 60 =7

60 to 80=3

80+ =4

Everyone interviewed lived in the barrow area and used services in Barrow

Question 1

Do you attend your GP surgery only when you are ill or need a repeat prescription?

Yes from all, with comments:

Diabetic clinic

Acupuncture

Nurse check ups

Emergencies only!

GPs come out to me!

Repeat prescriptions

Only if ill

GP's too busy for anything else!

Question 2

Would you ask your GP or Practice Nurse for information about living a healthier life?

1 said don't know, 10 said No

Comments:

GP has no time to listen

Straight in and out of GP

Nurse tells me in no uncertain terms to live a healthy life style.

Don't need to live a healthy life, I have cancer!

Asked for information about smoking cessation

Got help with anorexia

Question 3

If not what stops you?

Doctors too busy

My daughter always answers all my questions

Past experience was very bad with GP, I am a long term cancer patient

I don't need advice, I lead a very healthy life. All young people in Barrow are all pie eaters! (Man in his 80's)

GP no time to listen, straight in and out

Not interested

GP rushes you in and out

Too frightened to ask

GP not there for that reason, there to deal with people who are ill

Question 4

Where do you find information and advice about living a healthy life?

GP, MIND charity, Internet (4 people get their info from the internet), personal Social Services Support Worker, magazines (popular with young people), friends, parents, newspapers, clinic, school classes, TV

Question 5

Where would be a better place for you to get this information and advice?

Hospital, health shops, Market, GP – if he had time and if the information was available, Chemists, Health Centres

Health information should be common knowledge.

Leaflets in school, tele, radio, drop in centres.

6 people – Don't know

Question 6

Do you think it would be a good idea to have other services like drop in information and advice services, fitness classes, childminding, mothercraft classes available in places like GP practices, or would it be better if they were available in other community settings and linked to GP practices?

2 people said just in GP practices, 2 in Community settings, 10 said community settings linked to a GP practice.

A couple thought GPs services should be separate.

1 person said No, put GPs out of business

Comments:

Already happening in Barrow

Follow up services are poor, not easy to get a diagnosis, once they have it, they are left with it without specialist support for a long time. This relate to Autism

Better family planning needed

Birth control

Question 7

What other services would you like to be offered either in places like GP Practises or in other community settings?

2 people Don't know

An affordable community gym

Social club for likeminded positive older people where a man of 80 can find a woman!

Affordable weight management (weight watchers too expensive)

Youth clubs – speakers on family problems, smoking, drinking, anger management

A gym I'm not scared to go to!!

Fitness centre with no waiting list

Birth control

Better publicity for what already exists

Question 8

What one thing would encourage you to lead a more healthy lifestyle?

Very healthy now

Free swimming, free gym, no waiting list fro gym when referred

Better weather, better eating habits

Cheaper weightwatchers

More money, can't afford things

To not have cancer!

Better attitude, positive attitude

More family things to do

Healthier places to eat (popular response from the young people we spoke to)

More healthy eating places

Cheaper facilities

Less drink(over 75 years old response)

Nothing

Just had a liver transplant

Would like a more healthy lifestyle, can't afford it

Feeling safe when going for a walk (older lady loves walking, frightened of going on her own)

Explanation/education about risks of leading an unhealthy lifestyle

Further comments and observations:

More healthier food needs to be available

Kids clubs needed, too expensive

Young people want places like juice bars, none available in Barrow

Would pay more for healthier food options

Easier to buy Macdonalds for £1.99- kids will eat that, difficult to get 5 a day in a tight budget and not able to drive.

General observations:

During transfer from Morecambe Bay PCT to NHS Cumbria, Barrow seems to have fallen through the net.

Lack of local information and education concerning preventative health issues.

Feeling that GPs are not interested, too busy, or not the right person to ask about general health issues.

Lack of money, evidence of rather spend money on drink and cigarettes rather than anything healthy

Barrow people feel isolated from rest of Cumbria health services

Bad weather used as an excuse to stay indoors

Lack of education around fitness health issues in schools

Surrounded by beautiful countryside and walks, there is no need for fitness gyms. Raise awareness of this

Boils down to lack of money

Lack of places to get specialist information about health issues

Just moved to area, great difficulty getting contraception – never had problems before. Moved in with boyfriend and doesn't want to get pregnant.

Drinking and smoking big issue

Need more community events for the family

Recommendations from the report

- Generally it was thought that GP's were not there to give out general health information. They were there to deal with the immediate problem and that was all. People appreciated they were very busy people, but seemed uncomfortable with asking for advice as to how to improve their general health. It would seem helpful to have health information stands visible and accessible in GP's surgeries, possibly with promotional information about local health related events etc.
- The impression was given that people are referred to one of the gyms in Barrow for exercise following a health related incident such as heart attacks etc. It seemed that there was a waiting list at this gym so people got fed up waiting to go, and their enthusiasm dwindled. It would be useful if this was investigated, and questions were asked as to why there was a waiting list, and how this could be rectified.
- A couple of ladies pointed out to us that they loved walking but felt afraid to do so on their own. Their health was being affected because they were feeling isolated and frustrated that they felt they could not see some of the lovely countryside around Barrow, or even do some of the lovely walks within the town itself. As 'Walking for Health' already exists at Cumbria CVS, Barrow, it would seem useful to raise this issue with them and look at ways of finding and supporting those local people who would benefit from their support.
- It was obvious that there were a lot of very young Mums pushing their young children about in pushchairs. When they were asked about general health information, their responses were clear. They wanted free exercise in gyms etc. It would seem that, not surprisingly, finance is a problem for these young mums. They felt that exercise in one of the local gyms was a luxury that they would like to be able to afford. Some were put off because they couldn't afford the 'right attire' to be accepted at one of the gyms. One young Mum actually taught dance classes herself, but wanted something she could afford for herself, but couldn't find it in Barrow. There is a need to encourage young mums, who in turn will encourage their youngsters, to lead a more active life. They thought there was a lack of information about any activities that were accessible to young families on a very tight budget.
- Most of the young people spoke about eating unhealthily, and knowing it, but they didn't have any information about what eating unhealthily meant for the long term for themselves or their children. If it was available and affordable, they said they would use a 'healthy café' rather than Macdonald's. It would seem that it is the convenience, the speed and the affordability that attracts them to Macdonald's. There is plenty of space in the restaurant for them to take in their prams. It would seem that Macdonald's have everything going for them except their unhealthy fast foods. If young people are already going there, could Macdonald's in Barrow be approached as a key partner with 'health services' to trial a new way of promoting healthy living. It could be suggested to them that

they work in partnership with 'promoting healthy living' and trial healthy options and advertise healthy living guidance throughout their restaurants.

- It would seem that generally people in Barrow do not feel that they have useful health information available locally. They look for information in magazines, the internet and outside their area. It was said that when Morecambe Bay NHS trust serviced the area there was a lot of information available, now people feel it has dwindled away. It would be useful to ask local people what health information they want, and how they would like to get that information.
- There seems to be a misconception about contraception advice being generally available. It was only touched on with a couple of young people, but their experiences were that they had found getting advice, and actual prescribed contraception difficult. As there seems to be a high incidence of young single mums in Barrow, does the question needs to be asked, are young people 'expected to know' where to go for contraception advice in Barrow? Because professionals know where to go does that mean those who need the service know? How is it promoted locally?