

Community Consultation: Nepalese Women's Health Day, 28th January 2012

This report outlines the findings from the community consultation event organised by Reading LINK. The event aimed to explore local Nepalese women's experiences of health and social care services.

Background

Reading LINK works in partnership with local voluntary and statutory agencies in order to ensure that local people have access to and are receiving an adequate level of service. Therefore in response to the results of surveys carried out by Reading Voluntary Action and NHS Berkshire West with the Nepalese community, Reading LINK organized a Nepalese Women's Health Day. The event brought together local health and social care services, with a focus on women's health issues, an opportunity to undergo a healthcheck and for Reading LINK to gather feedback from the women about access to health services.

The Event

Community Engagement

In order to plan and manage the event Reading LINK made contact with local community groups and grass roots organisations that work with the Nepalese community. They supported Reading LINK to promote, organize and run the event on the day. With their support Reading LINK were able to produce posters and flyers in both the English and Nepalese language. We also targeted shops and community meeting places local to the venue and frequented by the Nepalese community to promote the event. In addition the event was held at a venue that is known to and used by the Nepalese community. Most invaluable Reading LINK were supported by a number of women from the Nepalese community who were able to provide interpretation for the LINK feedback sessions, for women to access information from the stalls and support to access the health checks. The event was also promoted via the LINK e-bulletin, LINK Website and RVA Directory.

Format

The event was held at The Warehouse in East Reading on Saturday 28th January from 1-5pm. An open invitation was issued to women and there was no requirement to register prior to the event. Approximately 130 women attended the event and 93 indicated that they would like to join the LINK Reference Group.

The event included information stalls, health checks and feedback sessions with Reading LINK. Attendees were able to get a health check, and then follow up any issues identified by visiting the necessary stallholders and share experience of services with Reading LINK. Any immediate issues identified by attendees around access to services during the feedback sessions were then directed to the necessary stall and were therefore able to get instant access to the information required.

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2

Information Stalls

Women were able to talk to and obtain information from:

- NHS Berkshire West Health Trainers
- Cholmeley Road GP Surgery
- NHS Dental Services
- Age UK
- Eat For Health
- Diabetes UK
- Breast Cancer Awareness
- Domestic Violence Forum
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Utulivu Women's Group
- Barnardo's
- Reading Borough Council Adult Social Care Services
- Nepalese Community Events/Information/Activities

- NHS Berkshire West Sexual Health Services
- NHS Berkshire West Mental Health Services
- Reading Borough Council Sports and Leisure Information Board

Health Checks

During the event 20 women were able to have a confidential health check with an NHS Berkshire West Nurse. This service was in high demand, with requests for healthchecks greater than time slots available; a further 32 women requested a health check. Therefore Reading LINK have organised for further health checks to be carried out for these women.

LINK Feedback Sessions

During the event two LINK feedback group sessions were held, where women were asked about how they found out about services or accessed services. An interpreter fully supported these sessions and participants were asked to indicate their response or to give their views. In total 54 women took part.

Feedback from Attendees

Reading LINK gathered feedback about access to GP's, Dentists, Pharmacy Services, Carers, women's health and general access to services. This is what we were told.

Local G.P's

1. Are you registered with a local doctor/G.P.?

Yes – 54 responses No – zero responses

2. Is everyone in your family registered with a local doctor/G.P.?

Yes – 54 responses No – zero responses

Comment: Generally the group understood the need to be registered with a local G.P to access health services.

3

3. Are you happy to talk to your doctor about women's issues?

Most women indicated that yes – if it was a

female GP (In group 1 of 26 women only 8

had a female G.P)

Most women indicated no they would not be happy to speak about women's issues if it is a male doctor

Women said:

- If they had a female GP they would be happy to talk to their GP about women's issues
- If they had a male GP they would not be confident to speak to their GP about women's issues
- Language is an issue as women could not explain to the G.P about their problem
- They are not given the chance to see a female GP
- Group 2/28 women – were asked if they knew they could ask to see a female GP and most did not know they could ask to see a female G.P.
- They sometimes see the nurse instead of the G.P for minor health problems /women's issues
- One woman felt that G.P could deal with minor problem but if you had a more serious concern then G.P's reluctant to refer to specialists.

4. If you can't get help from G.P where would you go to get help?

No alternatives were given by the women

Dentists

5. Are you/your family registered with an NHS Dentist?

Yes – 7 responses No – 47 responses

6. What are you reasons for not being registered with a dentist?

Women said:

- Don't currently have any dental problems – so don't go to the dentist
- Not aware of NHS Dentists (Lists of NHS dentists currently taking new patients circulated)

Pharmacy Services

7. Where do you go to get information/advice about medicines?

Local pharmacy - yes

Local doctor/nurse - yes

No other sources given when asked

Carers

8. Do you need look after someone who needs extra care at home? (i.e someone who needs help with washing/dressing or who is disabled)

Yes – no responses No – 54 responses

4

Accessing Health Services

9. Where do you go to find out about health services?

Local G.P – Most women indicated that they would go to their G.P for routine advice

Local Hospital – Most women indicated that they would only attend the hospital for emergency situations

Internet – 7 women indicated they would use internet

Local centres which may host health services i.e. Warehouse – all indicated no

Community groups providing health information – all indicated no

Relative/ someone you know – Most women indicated they would seek advice via this method

Other

Walk-in Centre if G.P surgery has no appointments

West Call if out of normal G.P hours

Women's Health

10. Thinking about your own health needs, what would help you most?

Regular health checks

Female G.P's

Quicker appointments

Events like today to get information

11. Do you know where to see a Midwife?

Yes – 6 indicated yes No – 48 indicated no



5

Feedback from Services/Stallholders

At the end of the event we asked the 14 stallholders to give a summary of the most common enquiries they dealt with during the event, any actions they may have identified for their organisations and their feedback on the event, this is what they told us:

NHS Berkshire Health Trainers

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Weight Loss
- Healthy eating

As a result of the event, the Health Trainers will be:

- Putting more focus on healthy lifestyles/weight loss as the Nepalese women were very interested in these aspects

Cholmeley Road G.P Surgery

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- How to perform self breast examination
- Information on cervical smears
- General health enquiries i.e Asthma, Eczema

As a result of the event, Cholmeley Road G.P Surgery will be:

- Sourcing more information in Nepalese/Hindi
- Liaise further with dental service and consider asking them to visit their surgery baby clinic

to talk to parents.

- Liaise with Diabetes UK regarding new changes to blood tests for diabetes

NHS Dental Services

Most frequent enquiries were about:

Personal issues about oral health problems (which highlighted the need for interpreter services to help Nepalese patients get registered with a dentist, take medical history and support during treatment)

As a result of the event, NHS dental services will be:

- Following up on networking contacts with other groups present at the event.

Age UK

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Information and advice queries including domestic energy checks
- Active ageing
- Silver Surfers

As a result of the event Age UK will be:

- Recruiting volunteers from the Nepalese community

Eat for Health

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Blood pressure checks
- Weight

As a result of the event Eat for Health identified a number of women who required referral to their

GP.

6

Diabetes UK

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Type of Diabetes people may have?
- What people should be eating? (Information needs to be culturally appropriate)
- Where can people get more information?
- Will everybody in the family get diabetes?
- People wanted to be tested for Diabetes (which Diabetes UK cannot offer)

As a result of the event Diabetes UK will be:

- Looking to get leaflets in different languages
- Looking to produce more information on prevention of Diabetes

Breast Cancer Services

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Breast examination
- Breast cancer awareness

As a result of the event Breast Cancer services will be:

- Contacting some women's groups to run private sessions for them.

Domestic Violence Forum

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Women wanting to know that the information was about
- Children putting their hand print on 'Their hands are not for hunting banner'
- Informing (worker) of other groups she is welcome to attend to speak about domestic

violence

As a result of the event, the Domestic Violence Forum will be:

- Getting literature translated to Nepali (no time to do before event)
- Invite members of the Nepali community to Domestic Violence Forum

- Linking to other groups and events that have met or found out about as a result of today's event.

Citizen's Advice Bureau

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Life Coaching Group sessions
- Advice service for Gurkas and new dependants – Wednesday mornings at CAB Office
- How to access CAB advice guide – National website

As a result of the event, the CAB will be:

- Following up link for Group Life Coaching
- Making further contact with Age UK Berkshire for partnership working

Barnardos

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Trafficking
- Domestic violence
- Child protection
- Family support and Family therapy
- Child Anxiety

7

As a result of the event, Barnardos will:

- Ensure that visitors take away tangible information.

Nepalese Community Information

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- Signposting for information at the event
- Seeking advice about the health checks at the event

Reading Borough Council Adult Social Care

Most frequent enquiries were about:

- RBC Services booklet translated into Nepalese

- Carers Information
- General enquiries

As a result of the event Reading Borough Council staff have:

- Fed back to senior managers how successful the event was
- Suggested that the Nepalese booklet is shared with other agencies
- Organised more copies of Nepalese booklet to be made available to LINK

What the stallholders said about the event:

Twelve stallholders stated that they found the event useful and some commented as follows:

- “Very useful/Useful day. Thank you for inviting us”
- “Well run and attended event. Useful to meet representatives from different organisations”
- “It would have been helpful if there was an interpreter allocated (specifically) to the stall as the language barrier was frustrating”
- “Other organisations are going to display our (breast cancer awareness) campaign to inform people about breast cancer”
- “Great day, really good feel and well worth attending”
- “Well organized event and well attended. Good networking opportunity. Opportunity to raise CAB profile in/with the Nepalese Community.”
- “Very effective event advise to organise again”
- “Very well organized event. Well done!”
- “LINK staff were very friendly and helpful as were the interpreters”
- “It’s always useful, I think, to have people in the community see ‘faces’ from Reading Borough Council. Telephoning can be daunting especially if you don’t know what you’re entitled to by way of support. I was very happy to be part of this event.”

8

Summary

The event was a great success with approximately 130 Nepalese women attending. Support was

clearly evident from the stallholders who worked on the day to provide information as clearly as possible. Reading LINK are very grateful to the tremendous support from the Nepalese volunteers who worked hard providing translation, registering people and helping the women get the information they required before and at the event, without this support the event would not have been the success it was. Reading LINK was able to meet the aim set out for this event and gather important feedback. We knew women wanted information and but needed support and this was achieved through this event via the interpreters and information printed in Nepalese proved to be popular.

The demand for health checks was high which again demonstrates the demand for health advice and reassurance or referral on for further tests in this group of women. Further health checks for 32 more women will be arranged, as there was not capacity to carry them out at the event.

The feedback given showed that women understood the most appropriate places to obtain health services for planned and emergency healthcare. Few women seemed to know where to find a midwife but many of the women were not of childbearing age. Most women (and their families) were not registered with an NHS Dentist. Access to female G.P's was key for women seeking advice about women's health/conditions, many did not know to ask for a female G.P and this was further compounded by a language barrier. Word of mouth and getting information from a trusted source within the community were important methods of communication for this group and evidently worked well when inviting women to attend.

Overall feedback on the day showed a satisfaction with the services they have accessed and a basic understanding of the English Health Care system. However women were keen to understand more about local services and learn more about how to stay healthy and care for themselves.

Recommendations

1. NHS Berkshire and the Clinical Commissioning groups to encourage G.P surgeries to clearly communicate the availability of female G.P appointments, so women can access these easily to seek advice regarding women's health issues or offer alternatives if the practice does not have any female G.P's i.e. Walk-in Centre.

2. NHS Berkshire and Reading Borough Council to ensure that health providers and community advocates have information to know how to access interpreter services to support people who need to request these services when translation is required for health appointments/social care support.

3. NHS Berkshire /Clinical Commissioning Groups/Reading Borough Council to consider identifying key community advocates, who can be contracted to disseminate key health messages into the Nepalese community. (Similar to the model being used by CAB who have trained community champions who provide information to the Nepalese community regarding benefits and debt. If this recommendation were to be explored further CAB would be willing to take part in discussions as to how this could be taken forward for health/social care)