

Cervical Screening Awards

Case Studies



Recognising excellence in increasing
local attendance and awareness of
cervical screening

Foreword

“An estimated 5,000 lives are saved every year as a result of the cervical screening programme in the UK, however the number attending this potentially life saving test is falling year on year. Currently over 1 in 4 women do not attend and among some age groups and communities this figure is even lower.”

“Improving awareness of cervical screening and cervical cancer is vital to increasing uptake across the UK. In response, many organisations have developed innovative programmes at a local level and in 2010 we launched the Cervical Screening Awards to reward these efforts, promote best practice and inspire others.

Since 2010 we have seen many excellent examples of organisations engaging with local communities in new and creative ways which have the potential to significantly impact health outcomes. One key aim of the awards is recognising campaigns which have focused on promoting screening uptake among particular hard to reach groups of women where it is lower than average, including: lesbian and bisexual women, women from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, women with learning disabilities and women at the first and last ages of screening.

We hope the following case studies from award winners from the last few years will motivate and inspire you in your own work and look forward to seeing your entries in the coming years”.

Robert Music
Chief Executive
Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust



Screening awareness among women with learning disabilities

2014
Joint
Winner

Who:
Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust
Campaign:
'Josephine visits the New Croft Centre'

2014 saw the Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust become a joint winner of the Cervical Screening Awards for their program to improve access to sexual health services for women with learning disabilities. The programme used the aid of 'Josephine', a life-sized anatomically correct female puppet, and her diary.

Historically sexual education for people with learning disabilities has been very limited, as it is often assumed that they are not engaging in sexual relationships. This has resulted in only 19% of women going for cervical screening when invited, compared with 77% of women in the general public.

The Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust identified this as an area where greater support and development was needed in order to encourage women with learning disabilities to access cervical screening, as well as creating a space for them to discuss wider women's health issues, sex and relationships.

Their specific project objective was to engage directly with local women with learning disabilities and forge relationships and partnerships with local organisations to increase cervical screening for these women.

Josephine is a unique puppet, her tummy can be opened to reveal her reproductive organs and her head has a space where users can place any thoughts and questions that they have so that Josephine can voice them. Along with the puppet itself the campaign created a cervical screening invitation for her, a diary extract written by her highlighting her worries and feelings about the appointment, and flyers and invites to advertise the event.

Josephine visited a group of women for a 10 week course, during which they were able to investigate her anatomy to learn about their own bodies. She was also used as an interactive resource to educate them on their rights, understand their thoughts and answer their questions. During one of these sessions Josephine received her invitation for cervical screening and the women all received an invitation to the event. They arrived at the New Croft Centre in Newcastle and the women were able to follow Josephine through the process and see exactly what would happen during the procedure.

Results:
The campaign worked well in its objective to engage with this specific community of women, most of who said that they felt more reassured and less scared after the sessions were over. It was a unique way to increase understanding and awareness in a group of women who are often overlooked on the issue of cervical screening.

Following the success of the project, a full time learning disability nurse has been recruited based in New Croft Centre who has participated in further projects with Josephine and works closely with colleagues across sexual health and public health. There are more projects planned with Josephine in the same format as before and the nurse is hoping to set up courses for men with learning disabilities with 'Jack', the anatomical male equivalent of Josephine. The project was also commended at the National Nursing Times Awards in London in the Learning Disability category.

Following the success of the project, a full time learning disability nurse has been recruited based in New Croft Centre



Screening awareness among 25-29 year olds

2014
Joint
Winner

Who:

Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group and Barnsley Council

Campaign:

'Fear or Smear'

The Barnsley Fear or Smear campaign, targeting young women aged 25–29, was the other joint winner of the 2014 awards.

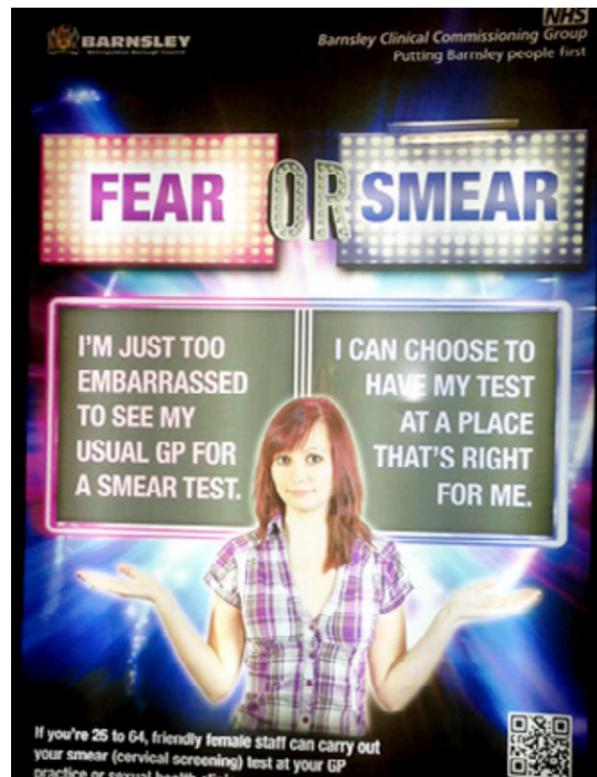
In Barnsley 27% of women aged 25-29 had not attended cervical screening and the objective of this campaign was to overcome the myths and barriers to this group attending screening. A previous research project in Yorkshire had found common reasons for not attending a cervical screening were because women were nervous, embarrassed, busy or unclear about what it's for and what's involved.

Fear or Smear used the language of real young Barnsley women using a 'game-show' element to present and explain the truth behind some of the most common test worries. The campaign also aimed to normalise cervical screenings by getting young women talking with their friends, mums and daughters.

Campaign materials and resources including posters, postcards and window stickers were distributed across the borough, in clinical settings including GP surgeries, non clinical settings including local shops and in local media and social media, all signposting to the campaign website.

Results:

The campaign was extremely visible across Barnsley and focus groups, interviews and surveys conducted after the campaign found 68% recalled seeing the campaign, 83% said it had increased their awareness and 92% said it would encourage them to think about attending screening. Participants reported the campaign had helped them overcome any misconceptions they used to have and individuals not yet eligible for screening felt they would be more likely to attend when invited.



92% said the campaign would encourage them to think about attending screening

Integrating screening awareness with sexual health services

2013
Winner

Who:

Isle of Wight NHS Trust Sexual Health Service

Campaign:

'An integrated sexual health service aimed at reducing the risk of cervical cancer'

In 2013, the Isle of Wight NHS Trust Sexual Health Service won an award for their programme to increase awareness and cervical screening uptake in eligible women attending any sexual health service.

The Isle of Wight Joint Strategic Needs Assessment identified a few areas of concern between 2010 and 2012. These included: an overall decrease in the screening coverage on the Island from over 85% to 79% in five years, significant difficulties in accessing services with 75% of the island being classified as villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings, and Index Multiple Deprivation classing the island as being among the 40% most deprived local authorities in England (some areas were in the 20% most deprived).

The program used the Sexual Health Service located in the easily accessible St Mary's Hospital to offer routine and opportunistic cervical screening to eligible women irrespective of their original reason for attendance. Women attend these services for a range of reasons including contraception, unplanned pregnancy and screening for sexually transmitted infections. Routine medical history taken in every circumstance ascertained the patient's last cervical screening and this information, combined with a variety of drop-in and appointment clinics during the day and evening, made it an ideal location to raise awareness, increase uptake and reach women not attending screening.

The programme was advertised in relevant media, on Facebook and Twitter, through health talks, health promotion events, the local Chamber of Commerce and through local outreach services working with groups including lesbian, gay and transgender individuals, women with mental health issues and vulnerable individuals.

Results:

Out of 100 cervical screening tests, 38% were opportunistic and 62% were booked. Four of those booked were up to six years overdue. Only four of the opportunistic tests were on time, the other 34 were overdue by anywhere from three months to nine years.

Furthermore 18% of the opportunistic screening were found to require further intervention and colposcopy, with one patient diagnosed with cervical cancer. This clearly demonstrates the success of the programme in increasing early diagnosis.

As a result of the Sexual Health Service project, the number of cervical screening tests are growing each year and 2015 saw a huge 86% increase on the number carried out in 2012. 9% of all tests are now referred for colposcopy and since winning the award, one opportunistic test (16 years overdue) showed invasive squamous cell carcinoma, demonstrating the impact that can result from sexual health services offering opportunistic cervical screening.



The number of tests are growing each year and 2015 saw a huge 86% increase from 2012

Reaching hard to reach groups



Who:
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
What:
'Cervical screening outreach service'

The 2012 award went to Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust for their Cervical Screening Outreach Service designed to reach 'hard to reach' groups of women and increase their attendance of cervical screening.

The project started in 2010 in an effort to combat the decline in cervical screening uptake in the local area over the previous eight years. The objectives of the campaign included:

- Identifying specific groups of women not attending their cervical screening
- Investigating what was preventing or discouraging them
- Putting practices in place to combat these issues.

Through communicating with poorer performing GP practices, community groups, attendees of health promotion events and individual women the following groups were identified as most likely to ignore the invitation to cervical screening:

- BAME women: facing language barriers and a lack of understanding about the importance of screening
- Women with learning and physical disabilities: the lack of resources available at many GP practices prevented them offering tailored support to these women
- Mothers with young children: time barriers
- Women who felt too scared or embarrassed

The service used a variety of techniques to assess and combat these barriers including:

- A dedicated outreach nurse: who was able to build up trusting relationships with non-responding women to support and assess them in a more individual way

- Telephone consultations: providing the outreach nurse with relaxed access to non-responding women, where necessary or possible in their own language, enabling women to feel better informed and more able to ask questions
- Outreach Cervical Screening Clinic: dedicated clinics set up throughout the Walsall Borough allowing women not wishing to or unable to access mainstream services to attend cervical screening, complemented by longer appointment times, consultation appointments and follow-up calls for women who need more support
- Home screening appointments: for those with learning or physical limitations
- DVDs, general information and leaflets: materials used in locations including libraries, GP surgeries, supermarkets, large companies, hotels, colleges, hairdressers, and by the outreach nurse at health promotion events, outreach clinics and multi-disciplinary team meetings to advertise and promote the services to the general public and health care professionals.

Results:

The decline in cervical screening uptake in Walsall was halted and the rates began to steadily rise. A patient satisfaction survey of women who had used the Service revealed that they felt comfortable with the outreach nurse, better informed and more likely to attend screening from having talked to her. Several reported the home screening service and Outreach Cervical Screening Clinics made it easier for them to attend. A number of women also stated that they will continue to be screened by the Cervical Screening Outreach Service rather than the mainstream service because it is better for them. There were no negative responses to the service from any of the survey respondents.

The decline in cervical screening in Walsall was halted and rates began to steadily rise

Increasing attendance among non-attenders of all ages



Who:
NHS Lanarkshire's North East Unit Health Improvement Team
Campaign:
'Smear Amnesty'

Cervical screening uptake had been slowly but steadily falling in Lanarkshire and particularly in the youngest age group (20-24 years). The smear amnesty targeted individual non-attenders by sending eye catching personalised invitations for evening events offering free massages, the opportunity to discuss fears or concerns with a female smear taker, refreshments and the choice to bring a 'buddy'. The invitation also included information on screening.

A further aspect of the programme was raising awareness of cervical screening at a community level and working in partnership with the Mossend Mosque and Community Learning and Development women's groups to deliver an education session on the benefits of cervical screening.

Results:

The programme saw 126 women from 7 practices attend 19 smear amnesties. Many of the women were persistent non-attenders with a gap in between smears ranging from 3.5 to 30 years. A questionnaire found the opportunity of an evening appointment, the personalised, eye-catching invitation and the information in the leaflet and letter all encouraged attendance. Next steps included rolling the programme out to further GP practices and increasing community awareness in particular during awareness weeks such as Cervical Cancer Prevention Week. The General Manager of North East Unit held the programme up as an example of good practice to be rolled out Lanarkshire-wide and it was included in the Lanarkshire Health Improvement Plan. A support pack 'Improving Cervical Screening Uptake: A Best Practice Toolkit' was also produced by the team to be disseminated across Lanarkshire.



The programme saw 126 women attend 19 smear amnesties. Many were persistent non-attenders with a gap between smears ranging from 3.5 to 30 years

Working with lesbian and bisexual women

2011
Winner

Who:

The Lesbian and Gay Foundation

Campaign:

'Are You Ready For Your Screen Test?'

The Lesbian and Gay Foundation, based in Manchester, were the 2011 winners for their 12 month campaign on the theme of 'Hollywood movies' aimed at lesbian and bisexual women.

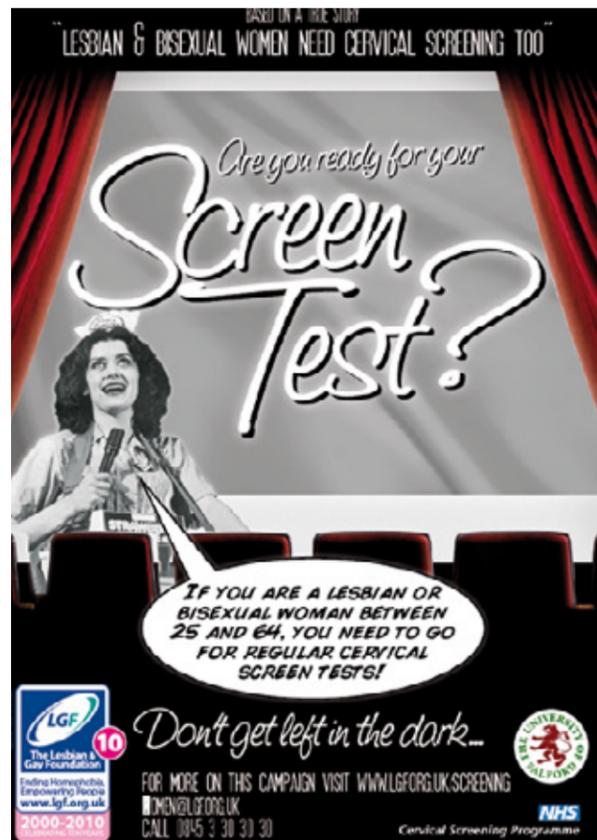
National NHS data, their own local knowledge and Stonewall research highlighted that not only was there a low uptake of cervical screening among this group, but also that women were often told the test is unnecessary for them and they are not at risk.

The objectives that the Lesbian and Gay Foundation set out for this project were to increase knowledge of cervical cancer, understanding of the need to attend screening, knowledge of rights for accessing screening and increasing confidence in confronting the barriers to screening for this group.

The campaign used posters, postcards, a detailed information booklet, advertising, a detailed web section, an interactive game and four viral videos all with an 'old Hollywood' theme, as well as social media, community outreach and radio advertisements to promote cervical screening for this group.

Results:

Surveys conducted into the attitudes, beliefs and understanding of lesbian and bisexual women, before and after the campaign, found that the number attending their screening had risen from 49% to 73%. 51% reported going for, booking or planning to book their test as a result of the campaign and 96% of participants felt the campaign was effective.



The number attending their screening had risen from 49% to 73% after the campaign

Targeting minority ethnic communities

2011
Highly
Commended

Who:

Community Health Improvement Team, Dudley PCT

Campaign:

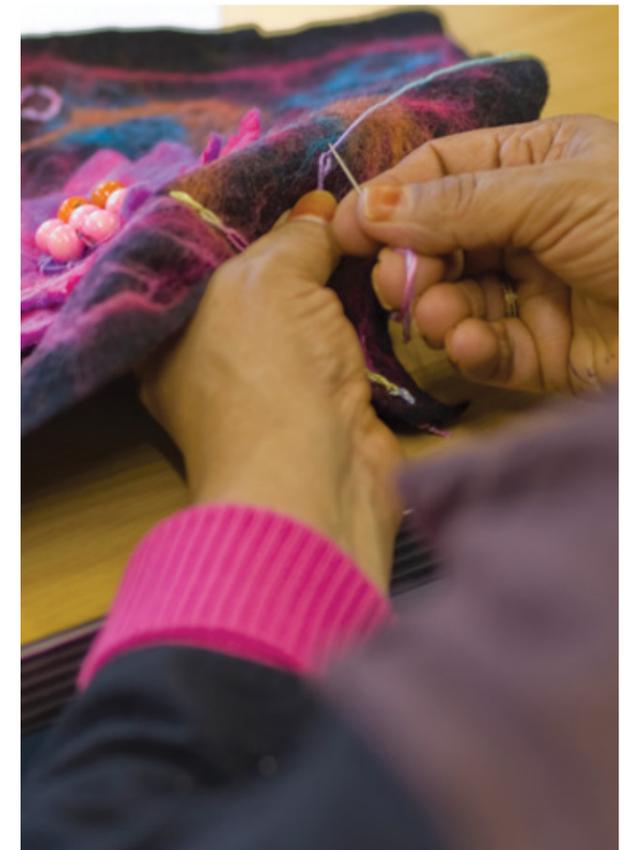
'Life Is Precious'

Dudley PCT Public Health Community Health Improvement Team and Walsall Council Creative Development Team worked closely in partnership to deliver a participatory arts and health project to engage with minority ethnic communities and raise awareness of cancer prevention, signs, symptoms and the importance of the three national screening programmes.

Participatory arts and health workshops were delivered to produce creative images and key messages to inform cancer screening awareness resources, these were translated into 3 community languages (Punjabi, Arabic and Urdu) and used to raise awareness of attending appropriate cancer screening programmes and presenting early at the GP with any signs and symptoms of concern. The programme also aimed to recruit Community Health Champions to support others in their communities beyond the duration of the project.

Results:

The year long campaign generated a boost in awareness of the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer and a positive change in behaviour when it came to screening. 17 health champions were developed who were then able to go back to their communities and share the knowledge they had gained with their families and friends. It was predicted they would reach around 400 people in the first year.



The campaign generated a boost in awareness of the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer

Increasing uptake of cervical screening in deprived communities

2010
Winner

Who:

NHS Salford

Campaign:

'Increasing uptake of cervical screening in unique and deprived communities'

The campaign objective was to raise screening uptake citywide, with a 1% increase by year end equating to about 500 women, and a focus on deprived areas. The project looked to raise awareness, offer additional and more convenient clinics, address the problems of reaching non English speaking women, cater for women with disabilities and also provide culturally and religiously sensitive services. GP practices with uptake figures below 80% were identified and target patients contacted. Working with the sexual health team enabled delivery of Saturday and evening clinics for women who were unable to attend during normal working hours

A sub project group concentrated on the delivery of a service for women with disabilities which meant women could attend cervical screening in a GP practice rather than at the hospital. This also included women with learning disabilities, so a learning disabilities facilitator was key to the design of the service. The cancer support service provided support to those who had appointments by making light refreshments, wheeling patients from the car to the clinic and waiting with them before and after an appointment. Some practices advised that a large number of Polish patients were not attending so letters in Polish were designed to increase understanding of the need to attend screening. A further collaborative project with children's centres and GP practices offered cervical screening at the centre enabling mothers to leave their children in a crèche whilst going for screening. For each of these projects posters, leaflets, adverts and articles were designed to compliment them.

Results:

Overall GP practices with low uptake saw increases in cervical screening uptake and there were no declines in uptake at any practice. The most significant success was the service held in the children's centre where the two associated GP practices saw an 8% and a 5% increase in uptake respectively. The Saturday and evening clinics saw over 200 patients in a two month period, an outstanding result. The practices that had experienced language barriers reported uptake in the Polish community had increased due to the translated letters.

Building on the success of the project, further work includes providing GPs with a flowchart supporting them to contact women who have not been screened or are overdue a screen, delivering additional Saturday and Sunday clinics from community health centres, working with the the Lesbian and Gay Foundation to ensure lesbian and bisexual women are aware of the need to be screened and supporting women with a mental health problem or those who are homeless to ensure they have access to screening.



The campaign objective was to raise screening uptake citywide by 1% in a year

Targeting low uptake among 25-34 year old women

2010
Highly
Commended

Who:

The Early Presentation of Cancer Symptoms Programme, North East Lincolnshire Care Trust Plus

Campaign:

'Late For Your Date'

The campaign aimed to target 25-34 year olds where cervical screening uptake was particularly low in order to increase awareness of cervical screening, increase attendance and involve young women in community action teams to act as passports into local communities and as champions to motivate peers.

Focus groups and previous insight were used to explore motivations and barriers to screening for this age group and find out which service changes would support attendance. A theme of 'Late for your Date?' and 'Inside Counts,' had already been established based on local insight and was retained to ensure a consistent approach. Utilising the research, Viking FM designed 40 second commercials dealing with different aspects of concern. All concluded with the same information and a support website address. All aspects from the presenter, to the time of airing, to use of music were tested with a sample survey of the target age group.

Viking FM Radio's street team visited over 50 local hairdressers to raise awareness of the campaign, taking resources, including lip balms, emery boards, pens, handbag cards and posters, which the businesses handed out to their clients. This work supported the campaign recognising hairdressers as key partners in targeting this age group. Community team members of the cancer collaborative also promoted the campaign as an extension of their work in various community settings.

Results:

Surveys of those who had heard the advert found 65% felt it encouraged them to make an appointment for their smear test. Of the target age group, a similar percentage indicated hearing and acting upon the advertisement. Surveys of women presenting for cervical screening at GP surgeries and clinics also indicated the radio campaign had a positive effect on the target audience.

Next steps included working collaboratively with the local Health Trainer programme to target women not attending their screening appointments, identified through GPs, through direct contact.



65% felt encouraged to make an appointment for their smear test

Targeted support for women with learning disabilities



Who:

Community Health Action Team for Learning Disabilities, Doncaster

Campaign:

'All about smear tests'

As little as 3% of women with learning disabilities in Doncaster were attending cervical screening and this project aimed to enable women with learning disabilities to learn more about cervical screening and provide targeted support for accessing services. Resources were specifically created using familiar places and faces from Doncaster and educational sessions were delivered at venues including Social Services. Training was also included in relationship courses at the same venue. A newly created booklet was distributed to every GP practice, social education centre and other relevant organisations in Doncaster.

Results:

Over a 20 month period, approximately 85 women received information about cervical screening through attending presentations or courses. Written evaluation and verbal feedback from service users suggested increased awareness and willingness to accept cervical screening invitations. Staff reported courses were greeted with enthusiasm and service users had noticeably increased knowledge when questioned about cervical screening. Next steps looked to further engage carers and parents and included the production of an easy read invitation and carer's information letter sent when an appointment is due. The sexual health clinic in Doncaster works much more closely with the community nurse team as a result of the project and photo journeys created as part of the project continue to be a resource. They can be sourced on the Trust website, are part of resource packs given to every GP practice in Doncaster and are used as part of health facilitation within the independent sector.

Each of our winning organisations created campaigns and programmes targeting specific groups to increase uptake and raise awareness of cervical screening.

The following may be helpful when identifying the best ways to reach and help increase screening uptake:

- Who are the women (patients) you want to reach?
- Have they never attended or has their attendance lapsed?
- What are their literacy needs?
- What is the best way to communicate with them?
- What are the barriers to screening attendance among that group?
- What interventions have already been tried with the groups that you want to engage in your area or in other areas?
- What is your budget?
- Who can you partner with to help you achieve your goals?
- What resources are available to you?
- How will you evaluate success?

For more information
jostrust.org.uk/screeningawards