

Community events and peer education with the Roma community

Who?

The Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust Glasgow Public Health Engagement Coordinator (PHEC) and Staff at The Space in Govanhill, Glasgow met to discuss ways of joint working in order to have better engagement with Romanian Roma women and to improve cancer outcomes.

How?

The PHEC was invited to attend some of the classes for Romanian Roma women in Govanhill, to introduce herself and Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust to the community. Over a period of 4 sessions, and with use of a translator, the PHEC was able to understand that Romanian Roma women face many barriers to screening, the main one being language. A plan was put in place to deliver awareness training to the women by members of their own community in their own language (Romani, a spoken language).

The PHEC worked alongside NHS Health Improvement staff to train 2 translators as Peer Educators, with a focus on group work, facilitator skills and cervical cancer awareness training. They also developed a basic, picture-based awareness session presentation, as well as a script for translation into Romanian by the NHS translation services, which was then translated into spoken Romani by the Peer Educators (this was quality assured by NHS translation services in Glasgow).

“I really enjoyed learning about cervical screening and how to deliver the information to my friends within my community. I feel more confident now and would love to do this as a job!”

- Lameeta, a Peer Educator

Outcomes

The awareness session encouraged discussion amongst the group, with topics including HPV myths, cultural norms and barriers to screening. The session led to a number of women organising screening appointments at their GP practice.

The session also gave the women an opportunity to raise other health issues that were important to them, including building on their understanding of how the NHS works, how they should access services and their rights within it. The local NHS Public Health Specialist delivered training designed for this purpose and more sessions will be offered. There will also be input from other partner agencies on breast health and screening.

The women took part in a team quiz at the end of the session, answering questions on their knowledge, with the winning team being given biscuits and toiletries as a prize. All women reported that they enjoyed the session and felt more knowledgeable and confident in making decisions around the HPV vaccination for their daughters at school and cervical screening.

More sessions are planned at The Space after lockdown, as well as a celebration of the Romanian Roma culture which will be hosted at the local Health Centre to break down barriers and build understanding and integration with the wider community.

“I never knew about HPV and would not have known who to ask about it. I do now!”

- Elena, a participant