



Capturing insight to tackle barriers to healthcare

A Good Practice Mentors case study with a General Practice Alliance network.

The General Practice (GP) Alliance network aims to improve access to primary care, promote healthy lifestyles and strengthen communities by connecting healthcare services and communities.

GPM was commissioned by one GP within the network to support a project to reach people not engaging with routine cancer screening services.

GPM provided training and support via Street Outreach as Social Action Research (SOSAR) - a proactive approach that enables you to find, approach and engage seldom heard voices (including the people less likely to engage with formal services and support)

A new approach to engaging with patients

The surgery's current engagement activities focused on reaching people via established community groups and organisations. The surgery recognised that the people they would most like to meet are less likely to access formal services.

NHS data was used to identify underrepresented areas within local screening services, providing the GPM team with information to tailor their training and support.

With the support of GPM, the surgery hoped to:

- tackle the barriers people experienced when accessing healthcare services
- raise healthcare literacy
- increase awareness of cancer screening in the area.

“We wish to use this opportunity to talk to our community about their perceptions of cancer screening to find out about the barriers they may have and how we might reduce those barriers”

Capturing insight from seldom heard residents

The GPM team provided in-person Street Outreach as Social Action Research (SOSAR) training, in an area identified as having low engagement with routine cancer screening and at a greater risk of health inequalities.

The SOSAR focus was to:

- proactively find, engage and informally capture insight from seldom engaged local residents about their behaviour and preconceptions to accessing routine cancer screening and wider healthcare services.



The GPM team supported the surgery staff via:

- **Informal Community Asset Mapping** - identifying the people they wanted to reach and where to find them (via the spaces and places they pass through and visit).
- **Identifying key observation and conversational indicators** - what to listen out for/what people might share during SOSAR interactions.
- **Identifying key insights** preconceptions and behaviors about screening the project would like to capture, and **developing an informal conversation framework and data capture tool.**
- **Providing in-person SOSAR skills training** - using street outreach skills, informal conversational strategies and data capture techniques.
- **In-person practical SOSAR activity** – putting shared skills, strategies and techniques into practice during community engagement.

The value of SOSAR data

SOSAR can informally capture insight and experience from people not engaging with formal services. **For example:**

Miss X is a young White British woman, aged 25-35, met and engaged through SOSAR outreach in her local shopping centre.

Miss X has not been for a smear test 'since before Covid', after finding her previous testing experience painful. If invited to another test, she is not sure if she would go.

If she noticed any changes or was worried about her health she would 'try to manage it by myself, or if serious go to A&E'. She would look online including her GP website if she wanted to find out information about routine testing or her health.

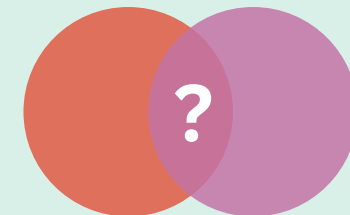


Street Outreach data

During the GPM supported outreach activity, conversational information was informally captured from locals to provide insight about behaviour and attitudes towards healthcare services.

Total people engaged	38
Women	21
Men	17
White British	26
Black	6
South Asian	4
Eastern European	2

'If you noticed something different or unusual about your health, what would you do?'	32 respondents
Visit the GP	53%
Go to A&E	8%
Do nothing	8%
Speak to friends, manage it themselves, ignore it, use the internet	Other

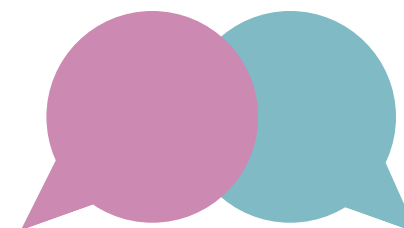


If invited to attend a routine cancer screening test	38 respondents
Wouldn't attend	68%
Unsure or felt it wasn't for them*	18%

*Of those, stated nothing could make them feel more comfortable to attend	22%
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17 people 'not looking for' or thinking about cancer screening received information about the screening process and available options

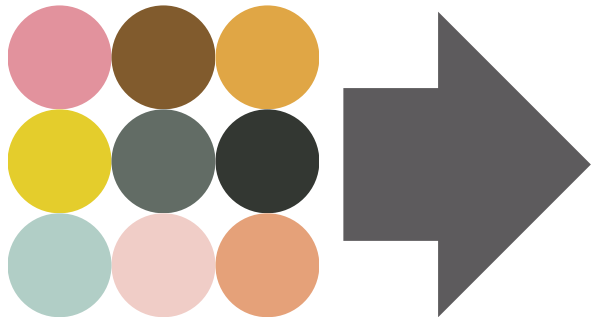
If they had questions about routine cancer screening:	27 respondents
Speak to a GP	12
Visit the internet	9
Use NHS app/online services	4
Speak to friends/family, use other online sources	2



After the insight and informal data was captured via the SOSAR activity, the GPM team analysed the information to identify:

- Who did we meet?
- What did we learn?
- What next?

A post-training reflection session shared the analysed data, and explored how 'working with' principles could help them to consider next steps in relation to the insight captured.



Impact of GPM support

- SOSAR provided an opportunity for the surgery staff to put information on cancer screening services into the hands of people 'not looking' for it, suggesting that similar approaches could be used in future to share information on wider healthcare services.
- Staff's confidence to proactively approach and engage the people not found via informal groups, activities, services and support was increased.
- Staff also reflected that their main learning had been around ***"how to approach people to ask opinions and get the best outcomes"***.

"It has been a brilliant experience, challenging for us all but GPM have been really supportive"



If you would like to discuss how GPM could support you to reach, engage and connect with your community then please drop us an email:

 [**GPM@syha.co.uk**](mailto:GPM@syha.co.uk)

For more information and resources please visit our website:

 [**GPM Website**](#)

Please see our Eventbrite page for our upcoming workshops

 [**GPM Eventbrite**](#)