

EngageGM

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Save the date >>>

Answer Cancer September Stakeholder Collaborative: 8th September 2020

We are pleased to inform you of our upcoming online Stakeholder Collaborative. This event will be a space for you to:

- Hear about Answer Cancer's work and plans
- Hear from Answer Cancer Champions about their work to engage communities during the Covid-19 crisis
- Listen to good practice about evaluating cancer screening projects, and take away some ideas about measuring your own success
- Share your own news and ask questions

To register for your place, click on this [link](#).

The second lockdown in Greater Manchester: Making every contact count

Greater Manchester went into a second lockdown, just at the beginning of August. It was disappointing news for the engagement team of Answer Cancer who had plans to gradually start face-to-face awareness sessions in Covid-secure community centres and other public spaces.

Although that may be on hold for the time being, Answer Cancer has been encouraging organisations and individuals to use creative ways to start a cancer conversation, using social media and other digital platforms. This was the idea behind our training initiative themed "Creative Approaches to Online and Remote Engagement" during August.

This is what one participant had to say after

the session: *"Had a wonderful training session by Elizabeth and Naga (Nigar) on Screening. Very well presented and learnt a lot from it"*.

Perhaps you may be wondering what you can do if you are not too confident on social media? Why not record your speech, blog (write on a subject) or vlog (create a video of yourself talking on a subject such as cancer or Covid) and share it on WhatsApp? What about using everyday telephone conversations and radio to send awareness messages?

ALL FM has free radio skills training places in October. If interested, please send an email to: ed@allfm.org

We are in together, so let us do it together.

Helping out >>>

Alzheimer's month

September is World Alzheimer's Month, an annual international event aimed at raising awareness and challenging stigma surrounding dementia and particularly Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Society will be using the 21st September to highlight some of issues faced by people affected by dementia. Click [here](#) for more information.



Wondering what you can do for this month? Here are a few tips:

Become a Dementia friend: Most people with dementia face social isolation and this has worsened under Covid-19. Click on [the link here](#) to see how you can become a Dementia friend and support the elderly in your community without breaking restriction rules.

Help the elderly in your home to perform their FIT test: Bowel cancer screening (FIT test) is for anybody aged 60-74. Every two years a test kit is sent through the post to complete. Those over 74 years can also request a screening kit. Click on [the video here](#) to see how you may assist a loved one to get it done.

Give a carer a break: Taking care of someone with Dementia can be a 24-hour job. Why not take over the caring responsibility of someone with dementia in your support bubble, just for a couple of hours, so that their regular carer can go for cancer screening and other medical appointments?

What we've been up to >>>

Answer Cancer Champions leading the way

Over the last month, our Answer Cancer Champions have been telling their stories and supporting our engagement work. Our digital champions have been busy sharing their stories on Facebook and Twitter posts. Others have been speaking on radio. This is the story of two champions supporting our work in Greater Manchester.

Asha Mehta and her husband, Dushyant shared their experiences with Bolton Hindu Forum radio listeners in the month of August. The conversation was about what inspired them to become Cancer Champions, how they felt to be part of a bigger movement and their efforts to make talking about cancer in a casual and open way within families and communities.

Asha explained that early detection saved her life. What was then a routine appointment led to rare cancer detection. She wanted to let everyone know why screening and a frank conversation with your GP is important.

Dushyant spoke from the perspective of a carer. He said:

"Once I heard the word 'Cancer' for my wife, it was a shock for me and the family. However, we had to deal with it and be positive. By becoming a carer, I have had to deal with various issues including giving emotional and practical support, and help with everyday tasks, driving to hospital appointments, personal care, keeping the house clean and tidy to avoid infection . . . help is needed at every stage".

Dushyant and Asha became Answer Cancer Champions this year and have already shared their experience with hundreds in their community.

Perhaps you may be inclined to do the same? Why not sign up [here](#) and you will be given the necessary support to get the cancer message across to others in your community or workplace.

Who cares for our carers?

Carers make up a large and growing part of the UK's population. Research released by Carers UK indicate we now have about 13.6 million people having unpaid caring responsibilities in the UK.

Prior to the pandemic, the majority of carers reported struggling to take time away from their caring responsibilities. They were likely to delay accessing medical treatment (including screening). Covid-19 has increased these barriers even further for carers who live in households that are shielding.

Coupled with this was the fact that some cancer screening services were paused at the peak of the pandemic, and referrals to cancer specialists from GPs also fell. There is an urgent need to ensure that carers get some time off for cancer screening appointments and they help those that they care for do the same.

It is also important they are aware of the signs and symptoms that need GP attention.



Answer Cancer is keen to reach and engage with carers to share clear messages around cancer screening and early detection. Please click [here](#) to get more information.

You may also contact the Gaddum Centre (an Answer Cancer organisational champion) or the Answer Cancer engagement team for a free awareness session.

We care about our carers!

Your questions Answered >>>

Q: I am no longer sexually active. Do I still need to attend my "smear tests"?

A: Yes!

Cervical screening helps doctors detect an exposure to the human papilloma virus even before it causes cancer. Not being sexually active does not remove your past exposure to the virus or prevent cancer cells from forming.

It is important that you continue going for regular cervical screening tests so that cell changes are captured early.

Final Thoughts...

If we detect cancer early it can be treated. You can find signs and symptoms of common cancers in community languages [here](#).

Eat well, live well, and get checked!

About us >>>

Answer Cancer is a partnership of four VCSE organisations: Unique Improvements, Voluntary Sector North West, BHA for Equality, and Salford CVS. Our work is funded by the Greater Manchester Health and Social care partnership.

Our aim is to address the cultural, social and systemic barriers that prevent people from taking up cancer screening.

How do we do it?

1. We work with community and faith groups across Greater Manchester, so they know what causes cancer & why screening is important.
2. We offer free information sessions on breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening.
3. We train individuals as Answer Cancer Champions.
4. We support community groups with grants so they can increase awareness about cancer screening.

For more information please contact:

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