

Health Literacy Workshop Summary Report

Background

In early 2013 health literacy was formally recognised as a key programme of work for tackling health inequalities, and as such was incorporated within a number of partnerships across central Lancashire. One of the first stages of the work programme was to engage the adult education sector to explore if at all health literacy was included in their programmes. Details of the study are captured below. A key recommendation of the study was to hold a workshop with adult education providers to explore the feasibility to progress this work stream.

As such, a health literacy workshop was held on the 6th March 2014 which aimed to:

- Identify relevant adult education programmes delivered by Lancashire further education providers;
- Gain an overview of curriculum content;
- Ascertain scope for further curriculum support or development around health literacy;
- Identify barriers and drivers that could impact upon effectiveness of future health literacy across adult education programmes;
- Enable public health leads to make strategic decisions about how and where to target next-stage health literacy development.

Lancashire County Council is taking a three staged approach to addressing health literacy in Lancashire:

1. Raising literacy/numeracy levels of the adult population through access to skills based courses. (Reading, writing and counting in health contexts)
2. Facilitating healthy choices and behaviour change through provision of health promotion information and campaigns. (The ability to discuss and participate in health decisions but also to apply this knowledge)
3. Providing good guidance and support for people with long term conditions and promoting self-care. (The ability to look at health information, decide whether it applies to you and is best for you, and to take greater control over life events and situations that influence health)

The Primary Care Trust for Central Lancashire led the first stage by commissioning the Developing Health Literacy in Adult Education across Lancashire scoping study. The key findings of the study included:

- There was generally a high level of interest and support;
- Some good practice is already taking place (English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), community provision, previous projects, some in workplace settings);

- Pre-entry and entry level study held most initial potential for embedding health literacy;
- Up-to-date information and resources were not always available or flexible enough;
- There was an identified need for health information and confidence to deliver health messages.

Workshop 6 March 2014

The following presentations were delivered, leading to the group discussions:

- Health Literacy in Lancashire: Gulab Singh, Specialist in Public Health, Lancashire County Council
- Developing Health Literacy in Adult Education across Lancashire: Overview of Scoping Exercise: Gavin Turnbull, Independent Researcher
- Lancashire Adult Learning Community Learning: Embedding Health Literacy: Karen Wignall, Curriculum Manager: Public Programme and Matthew Corbett, Curriculum Leader - ESOL, Adult & Community Services, Lancashire Adult Learning

The group discussions explored the following questions:

- How can we best identify or develop up-to-date, relevant and robust / adaptable health literacy resources for use?
- How can we best build the capacity, capability, awareness and confidence of staff in order to further develop and deliver health literacy themes within and across programmes?
- What is the likely to be most effective way to develop health literacy initiatives across Lancashire? Pilot studies or blanket approach? How do we share information / skills / curriculum materials?

Key Points from Discussion

Developing health literacy initiatives across Lancashire:

- There was recognition that health literacy should be embedded into the core business of education settings, in the same way that Equality and Diversity has become part of everyday working. Two separate strands were identified:
 - Adult and Young People FE College programmes (e.g. ESOL, Functional skills, LLDD, workplace programmes, tutorial and other programmes)
 - Community learning

- There are opportunities to develop health literacy within vocational areas such as health and safety modules.
- Health literacy is already happening within classroom based ESOL programmes and it is important that this learning is shared but also that the impact is being measured. Some assistance with this may be required in some areas.

Identifying resources for use:

- Specific off the shelf resources were probably not the way forward and likely to be unpopular since they need differentiating by programme and tutor preference.
- A service directory for localities is also likely to be unhelpful since it is likely to go out of date very quickly and would require significant time investment to maintain.
- An information resource containing links to existing local and national service sites was deemed to be most useful and would encourage people to access local provider sites to obtain information on services.
- The short animation film to be produced by Lancashire County Council could be a useful mechanism for raising awareness amongst staff and to fuelling conversations on how health literacy relates to their areas. It was also seen as important to have examples of how health literacy themes have been integrated into different programmes.
- Curriculum staff and tutors were seen as best placed to incorporate context specific elements of health literacy into delivery of the curriculum.

Capacity, capability, awareness and confidence building of curriculum staff:

- There was a need to recognise that the term health literacy moves wider than just a focus on literacy.
- There are different levels of raising awareness of health literacy: organisational, staff and people.
- Raising awareness of health literacy amongst staff was seen as the key first step to improve general understanding and awareness of the importance of health literacy. The short animation film to be produced by Lancashire County Council could be a useful mechanism for raising awareness amongst staff and to kick start conversations on how health literacy relates to their areas.

Next Steps

1. Health literacy is already being incorporated as part of both Community Learning Programmes and Adult and Young People FE College programmes although may not be recognised as health literacy. It is important that case

studies of good practice are showcased in order to raise awareness of health literacy amongst staff.

Action:

- I. public health to compile template to capture case studies and disseminate
 - II. Interested parties to submit short case studies to share examples of good practice.
2. An information resource containing links to existing local and national service sites was deemed to be most useful and would encourage people to access local provider sites to obtain information on services.

Action:

- I. Lancashire County Council to lead on production of this resource with input from further education providers
3. The short animation film to be produced by Lancashire County Council could be a useful mechanism for raising awareness amongst staff.

Action:

- I. Once this animation is finalised, Lancashire County Council will forward this resource for use amongst community learning and Adult and Young People FE College programme staff.

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