



Wandsworth Health and Wellbeing Events Evaluation Report

JUNE 2023 – APRIL 2024

This is the evaluation report of SPEAR's Homeless Health Link Health and Wellbeing Days, delivered in Wandsworth between June 2023 and April 2024. This evaluation was undertaken by Claire Carter and Sarah Fishbourne of Impact Consultancy and Research.



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74%

of people completing a feedback form said that they **know more about health services as a result of attending a health day.**



76%

of people completing a feedback form said that they had a **better understanding of how to access a GP, dentist or therapeutic support.**



54%

said they **felt confident in accessing primary healthcare services.**



68%

of those attending the health days **rated them as 'good or excellent'.**



1. Introduction

In May 2023 SPEAR was awarded monies from the South West London Integrated Care System (SWL ICS) Health Inequalities Fund to deliver six additional Health and Wellbeing Days for those experiencing homelessness in the London borough of Wandsworth. The aim of the project was to improve rough sleeper's access and engagement with primary healthcare services.

2. Background and context

This project was developed in response to the health inequalities facing those who are experiencing homelessness in South West London. It is well established that rough sleepers are more likely to have poorer physical and mental health than the general population and their health needs are more likely to be chronic, multiple and complex. The mean age of death of someone who is sleeping rough or in emergency shelters is in their 40s,¹ and people frequently develop long-term conditions² at a young age. A third of people who die while homeless, lose their lives from treatable conditions. Despite these inequalities, people who are experiencing homelessness also face a number of barriers to accessing healthcare services, such as:

Address



- many people assume you need a fixed address for services, when in

fact you don't. For those who do get an appointment, there are the practicalities of where to send letters for appointments and reminders.

Money



- no phone credit to make the appointment, no travel money to get there, or no access to the internet.

Information



- lack of accessible information to find out how to get support, especially during the pandemic, as well as lack of digital and literacy skills to access information.

Confidence



- many people feel they don't deserve support or care, and these negative feelings can stop them seeking the services available to them. Low self-worth and isolation also mean people may have a fear of bad news, so they simply avoid healthcare. They don't have the mental strength to face difficult health issues, or the love and support that friends and family can offer.

Trust



- previous negative experiences with institutions and professionals (some since childhood) are a common barrier to seeking help.

¹ ONS (2022). Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales : 2021 registrations.

² Aldridge. R. et al. (2019). Causes of death among homeless people: a population-based cross-sectional study of linked hospitalisation and mortality data in England.

This project built upon SPEAR’s established Homeless Health Link service, which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of those experiencing homelessness in South West London. This service connects rough sleepers to local healthcare services, provides patient advocacy and raises awareness of the barrier’s rough sleepers face with health professionals. This project also builds upon SPEAR’s partnership with the NHS Primary Care Team, who together piloted drop-in Health and Wellbeing Days in 2020/21. These days aimed to increase Covid-19 vaccine uptake, reduce vaccine hesitancy and address other health inequalities in rough sleepers and those seeking asylum in South West London. These days were well attended with over 60 visitors and were also well received by key health partners.

The primary focus of this extension project was to continue to provide access to local healthcare services for rough sleepers in the London borough of Wandsworth throughout June 2023 to April 2024, with a concentration of events during the winter months. Winter can be an exceptionally challenging time for rough sleepers, with the cold temperatures causing and exacerbating health conditions. In addition, the NHS faces greater pressures in the winter, with an increase in seasonal illnesses and conditions impacted by the cold weather.

Therefore, this project sought to reduce the burden on the NHS, by empowering rough sleepers to access and engage with healthcare services, so they can begin to address long-standing health conditions, conditions in their early stages or even those yet to be identified.

Project outcomes

THE FOUR OUTCOMES THAT THE PROJECT INTENDED TO ACHIEVE WERE:

- 1 People experiencing homelessness will report **feeling better informed about available health services.**
- 2 People experiencing homelessness will have a **greater understanding of how to access primary healthcare services.**
- 3 People experiencing homelessness report **improved confidence in accessing primary healthcare services.**
- 4 People experiencing homelessness experience a **positive experience from engaging with healthcare services at our Health and Wellbeing Days.**

3. Project Activity

Health Inequalities funding was received to support the delivery of community-based Health and Wellbeing Days.

SIX HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAYS WERE HELD BETWEEN JUNE 2023 AND APRIL 2024.

A breakdown of the numbers attending the events is provided below. SPEAR's Health and Wellbeing Days bring together health and wellbeing organisations and services within one community venue for increased accessibility by people experiencing homelessness, former rough sleepers or otherwise vulnerable individuals. The health days offer health checks and advice on other preventative programmes, seasonal vaccinations and access to other health services, such as GP, mental health support and dentistry advice. In addition, they offer holistic services, such as haircuts, hot meals and access to the clothing bank.

Health checks can include screening for the main blood borne viruses, TB, sexually transmitted infections, diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer and liver disease. Attendees also have access to a GP and information and advice on dental health, addiction, mental health and bowel screening, amongst others.

The Health and Wellbeing Days are delivered in collaboration with SPEAR's existing partners within the South West

London Integrated Care System and include primary and secondary health and social care providers. In addition, the days are attended by SPEAR's rough sleeper outreach teams. A list of the partners in attendance at the events is attached as Appendix A.

The Health and Wellbeing Days are supported by a team of local volunteers, including those who run the clothing pop-up, barbers and a volunteer GP, who specialises in mental health.

In addition to the health-services on offer, clients are offered:

- A hot breakfast and a hot lunch.
- Gift bags for visitors, which include toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrush, shower gel etc), food vouchers and food items, which are portable, ready to eat and nutritious, such as self-heating meals.
- Access to translators.

The events were held at community-based venues, one of which runs a daily drop-in support sessions for rough sleepers. Flyers advertising the events were distributed via the venues and a wide range of other local outlets such as supermarkets, charity shops, GP surgeries and chemists and were translated into Romanian and Polish in order to attract rough sleepers from the local migrant population.

4. Evaluation methodology

Client data

People attending the Health and Wellbeing Days were asked to provide feedback on the event and to answer some survey questions relating to the project outcomes. Responses to the questions were recorded by SPEAR staff on tablets and subsequently inputted onto SPEAR's client management database.

Whilst data was not collected from every attendee, 307 of those attending completed a survey. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix C.

SPEAR also recorded the number of people in attendance and whether they were existing SPEAR clients or unknown to SPEAR.



Agency data

All agencies in attendance at the health days were asked to record the number of clients they saw and the nature of the interaction e.g. advice on giving up smoking, flu vaccination etc. Agencies were also asked to complete a feedback form to gather agencies perception on the extent to which the health days were effective in achieving the project outcomes and any suggestions about how the events could be improved. A copy of this survey is attached as Appendix D.

Handling and interpreting the data

In order to ensure that the data collected via the surveys was uniform and ready for analysis, a process of data cleansing was undertaken. This ensured that all duplicate entries collected at the same event and erroneous comments or data were removed from the dataset.

All the statistics contained within this report are based on the 307 completed surveys collected at the Health and Wellbeing Days or the 76 agency feedback forms. Statistics where appropriate are shown first as a percentage and then as the number of individuals that selected that response. It is not possible to determine how many repeat attendees completed surveys and as such this caveat should be taken into account when reviewing the statistics. Where numbers relating to responses do not equate to the total number of completed surveys this is due to a number of nil responses.

5. Evaluation findings

Meeting project outcomes

The following evaluation data collected at the Health and Wellbeing Days suggests that the outcomes were met by the project.

OUTCOME ONE: People experiencing homelessness will report feeling better informed about available health services.

74% of people completing a feedback form said that they **know more about health services as a result of attending a health day.**

OUTCOME TWO: People experiencing homelessness will have a greater understanding of how to access primary healthcare services.

76% of people completing a feedback form said that they **had a better understanding of how to access a GP, dentist or therapeutic support.**

OUTCOME THREE: People experiencing homelessness report improved confidence in accessing primary healthcare services.³

54% said they felt **confident in accessing primary healthcare services.**

OUTCOME FOUR: People experiencing homelessness experience a positive experience from engaging with healthcare services at our Health and Wellbeing Days.

68% of those attending the health days **rated them as 'good or 'excellent'.**

These findings demonstrate that the events are highly valued and that they are an effective way of informing people about the health services available to them and getting them to seek advice



³ To simplify the Health and Wellbeing Day survey the questions relating to outcomes 2 & 3 were combined however a decision was made to separate out these questions and a question about 'confidence' in accessing primary healthcare services was introduced for the final event on 05.04.24. This question will form part of the survey for all health and wellbeing event surveys going forward.

and support and take up the services on offer that they may not otherwise address. The findings also highlight that whilst the events help to increase understanding about how to access primary healthcare services levels of confidence to access primary health care are lower. This illustrates the gap between knowledge and understanding and the potential to translate this into action due to low levels of confidence. It would be useful to explore this further in any future evaluation to understand what this lack of confidence stems from and how it could be best addressed.

Client and monitoring data

All six of the Health and Wellbeing Days were well attended with 612 people⁴ attending in total. Due to the data being collected anonymously it is not possible to determine from the data how many of these 612 are unique visitors. Feedback was collected from 307 (50%) of the attendees. Of those that completed the survey 87 (28%) had previously attended a Health and Wellbeing Day and 125 (41%) were attending a Health and Wellbeing Day for the first time. These attendance figures evidence that the events consistently attract new people but also have a significant number of core attendees. This highlights the value of these events in providing people with a regular opportunity to access health and wellbeing support and their importance in reaching people who may not have an existing relationship with local support services through choice or circumstance.

The days were positively received with 68% (210) of those surveyed rating the day as excellent or good (75 said it was excellent and 135 said it was good). This demonstrates that overall most people surveyed had a positive experience of attending the Health and Wellbeing Days.

To find out why people had attended the event and what their specific health support needs were, people were asked to identify what health issue they were hoping to get support with at the event. 15% (47) of survey respondents gave no reason for attending the event this may be due to people feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed about talking about their health needs or attended primarily for the non-health related services on offer.

Of those that did give a reason the most common responses were:

- Teeth (46)
- Mental health (43)
- Feet (25)
- Heart (17)
- Liver (16)
- Flu & Covid-19 vaccinations (16)
- Respiratory (15)



People also highlighted a range of other non-health specific services as reasons why they had attended the event the most common responses were:

- Food (27)
- Haircut (23)
- Accommodation support (10)
- Clothing (9)
- Addiction support (8)
- Social interaction (8)

74% (227) of survey respondents said they knew more about health services available as a result of attending. Of those that said they did not know more about health services as a result of attending the event 76% of these were attending an event for the first time. This may indicate that the more frequently people attend events the more informed they feel about health services.

76% (232) of attendees stated they understood how they could get to see a GP, dentist or access therapeutic support as a result of attending the Health and Wellbeing Day.

54% (13)⁴ of attendees stated they felt more confident about how they could get to see a GP, dentist or access therapeutic support as a result of attending the Health and Wellbeing Day.

64% (197) said they felt they would be better able to manage their own health as a result of attending the Health and Wellbeing Day.

The most common reasons why people felt that they wouldn't be able to manage their own health better were:

- poor mental health (25)
- being homeless (19)
- existing health conditions (17)
- language barriers (17)
- poverty (14)
- addiction issues (8)

Attendees were asked what would help them to manage their health. The majority of respondents stated that they either were already being helped or did not need further help. Where people did specify a need for support 19 people said help with accommodation, 16 said more health days and 12 said follow-up support from SPEAR.

When asked how the Health and Wellbeing Days could be improved the majority of those that responded did not have any suggestions to make or felt that the events could not be improved. Those that did make suggestions were most likely to reference the need for more frequent events (28) and the need for a broader range of agencies and services (17). The most commonly mentioned services that were perceived as gaps were CAB, dentist and employment services. Other suggestions were the need for a more extensive clothing bank, including a wider range of clothing and women's clothing (14), a bigger venue (9) and translators, specifically Nigerian, Spanish and Romanian.

⁴ This question was only introduced into the survey on the final event so the response rate to this question is low.

Observation and qualitative feedback

As part of this evaluation, the evaluators also attended a health day with the intention of observing how the Health and Wellbeing Days were run and speaking to rough sleepers to identify how the health days benefited them.

Engagement with those in attendance was difficult, primarily due to attendees wishing to socialise with each other, talk to service providers or eat their meal. However from the limited feedback received and observing the health day in action, it was evident that the events provide a welcoming and safe environment where people can meet and socialise and access a range of services in a relaxed and non-judgemental way.

Conversations with attendees identified the following key benefits:

- Being able to take advantage of health services there and then which ordinarily would only be available via an appointment e.g. vaccination service.
- Access to a hot meal and drinks.
- Opportunities to socialise with others.
- Opportunity to access free services e.g. barber and massage practitioner.
- Opportunity to access dentistry advice.

Agency feedback

Approximately 30 agencies took part in the six Health and Wellbeing Days. A total of 76 feedback forms were completed across the six events. A copy of the feedback form is attached as Appendix D. 70 of those surveyed felt the event was very effective or effective at informing people about what health services are available to rough sleepers (54 very effective and 16 effective). Of the remaining agencies four felt it was quite effective and two were 'unsure'.

When asked about their perception of how effective agencies felt the events were at giving people the confidence to access healthcare services independently, 71 of those surveyed felt the event was very effective or effective (40 very effective and 31 effective). Three agencies felt they were quite effective, and one felt they were unsure (one agency did not answer this question).

Agencies were also asked how effective they felt the events were at helping people to manage their own health. 62 of those surveyed felt the event was either very effective or effective at helping people to manage their own health (35 agencies very effective and 27 felt it was effective). Of the remaining agencies 12 felt it was quite effective and two were unsure.

Agencies observed that attendees most commonly sought help in relation to mental health support (including help to address isolation) issues arising from addiction, particularly alcohol addiction, and the need to access dentistry and health services more widely.



“Excellent service for the homeless community. Very happy to be involved as working with the local team makes trust and engagement better.”

Service provider



“Brilliant event, brilliant conditions, warm food/drinks. Support from multicultural team and volunteers. Keep up this excellent work and spread to wider community and make life better.”

Service provider

The response from agencies was very positive, organisations mostly valued the chance to talk directly to rough sleepers but also the opportunity to network with other agencies. Agencies often remarked on the professionalism of the team at SPEAR and how the health days were meeting a need.

In terms of what could be done to improve the event the most common

response was to offer more services or more people delivering the same service e.g. barber and dentistry. Agencies also felt that there may be value in the health days being held more frequently. The fact that the biggest area for improvement was seen as doing ‘more of the same’ is strong evidence to suggest that agencies greatly appreciate the health days and see the value of them to rough sleepers.



6. Areas for development

The following section identifies aspects of the Health and Wellbeing Days that would benefit from some development or further consideration in order to; increase the impact for beneficiaries or provide more insight that will strengthen the evidence base that underpins the project.

1. To ensure that there is consistent access at every event to core health services e.g. GP, dentistry advice, mental health support, podiatry, screenings.
2. To continue to look for additional service providers that can increase the 'holistic person-centred' focus of the events.
3. Explore ways to increase levels of awareness and engagement with the range of services on offer at the events.
4. To produce case studies that highlight how attendance at the Health and Wellbeing Days has helped individuals to better understand and manage their health and wellbeing.
5. To undertake some qualitative evaluation with a sample of attendees to understand how they could be supported to increase confidence levels to access primary health care services beyond the events.
6. Introduce the following additional questions in the attendee survey to provide further valuable insight:
 - Why did you rate the event as you did?
 - What would help / encourage you take advantage of the services on offer?
7. Undertake some qualitative evaluation with agencies in order to gain deeper insight into their perspectives on the projects impact.
8. Find alternative venues that can provide access to private space to facilitate confidential conversations.
9. Provide attendees with some information about what agencies were in attendance and what support they could offer people.



“Service has good engagement, service users have been treated with respect and dignity, options on access to other services that may be beneficial have been given (information given), staff from SPEAR are professional, offering a pleasant, safe and non-judgemental mutual service.”

Service provider



Conclusion

It is evident from the feedback and data collected that SPEAR's Health and Wellbeing Days play an important role in helping rough sleepers and other vulnerable individuals to access services, information and support to help them address and manage their health and wellbeing.

This person-centred and holistic approach to accessing health and social care services is clearly valued by both the beneficiaries and the agencies in attendance. In addition, **the multi-agency approach combined with the informal drop-in nature of these events actively encourages people to address health concerns that would otherwise go unaddressed.** Whilst the removal of barriers that prohibit and discourage rough sleepers from accessing primary healthcare services has helped to increase people's understanding of how to access health services it is clear that many rough sleepers lack the confidence to access traditional healthcare services located in clinical settings. As such these types of events provide an essential alternative to traditional healthcare services that demand a certain degree of permanency, planning and provision.

Beyond access to health services the events also provide an opportunity for people to socialise in a welcoming and non-judgemental setting and play an important role in improving people's sense of wellbeing and self-worth through the provision of barber services and the clothes bank.



Based on the findings of this report SPEAR should now consider how it can strengthen and enhance the offer provided through these days and continue to develop its understanding about how it can maximise the impact of the events and collect stories that illustrate the difference that this service makes to the people it supports.

These findings should then be shared with key policy makers and commissioners to ensure that that the health needs and challenges of some of the most vulnerable members of society are taken into account when planning and resourcing local health services.



Appendix A

HEALTHCARE & SUPPORT AGENCIES OFFERING SERVICES AT THE SPEAR HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAYS

1. Covid-19 and flu vaccinations
2. St George's University Hospital NHS provided liver scanning and blood borne virus testing
3. GP volunteer
4. Healthwatch Richmond
5. Kings College Dental Institute
6. Refuge
7. Spectra London
8. Stop Smoking Service
9. Volunteer barber
10. SPEAR rough sleeper outreach teams
11. Premium Linguistics Service
12. Dose of Nature



13. NHS South West London ICB
14. The Vineyard Community Centre
15. The Mulberry Centre
16. Richmond Mind
17. Women in Prison
18. RWCDAS
19. CLCH
20. Massage Works
21. Community Table
22. RHEST
23. Springboard
24. St Mungos Outreach
25. Ace of Clubs
26. Find and Treat
27. Holy Trinity Church Tooting
28. CREW experience
29. KIS



Appendix B

NUMBER OF AGENCY INTERACTIONS

The following table shows a breakdown by intervention of the number of attendees that received support.

	30.06.23	26.09.23	26.10.23	07.12.23	19.01.24	05.04.24	TOTAL
Number attending	65	200	65	52	190	40	612
Numbers who received a vaccination (flu, Covid)	7	-	20	10	-	-	37
Numbers who received a health check/test (liver scan, BBV test, breast screening)	40	22	-	40	85	10	197
Numbers who had a haircut	-	7	5	-	10	26	48
Numbers who accessed GP	-	-	-	11	-	-	11
Numbers who accessed mental health support	-	18	11	17	18	10	74
Numbers who sought dentistry advice	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
Numbers who accessed the clothing project	32	99	32	25	94	19	301
Numbers who were offered and engaged with support from Health Link workers (some clients offered more than one engagement at events)	114	162	147	56	320	57	856
Numbers who were offered and engaged with support from other e.g. financial advice	20	4	33	25	22	50	154

Appendix C

HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAY CLIENT SURVEY

Core Questions

- Client Name
- In person or follow up call (tick box options)
- If possible identify the intervention (Health and Wellbeing Days, one to one health support, one to one digital drop-in and digital workshop) the user is then routed to the relevant questions for that intervention..
- Date
- Part of DI cohort (yes, no tick box)

SPEAR Health & Wellbeing Day	Drop down options
<p>1. How did it go?</p>	<p>Poor / OK / good / excellent / not sure</p>
<p>2. What was it you were hoping to get help with today?</p>	<p>Teeth Feet Mental Health Heart Circulation Respiratory Other (please specify)</p>
<p>3. Do you feel like you know more about what health services are available?</p>	<p>No / A bit / A lot / Not sure</p>
<p>4. Do you feel confident that you know how you can get to see a GP / Dentist / therapeutic support?</p>	<p>Yes / No / Don't know</p>
<p>5. After today, do you feel like you will be able to manage your own health better?</p>	<p>Yes / No / Don't know</p>
<p>6. What might stop you from managing your own health? How can we help / support you?</p>	
<p>7. How could we improve these days?</p>	
<p>8. Any observations / comments / quotes</p>	

Appendix D



SPEAR
homelessness to independence



SPEAR HEALTH & WELLBEING DAYS – AGENCY FEEDBACK

<p>Date</p>	<p>Agency name:</p>
<p>Please can you take a moment to answers these questions and give us your feedback so we can help to improve these events. Many thanks</p>	
<p>1 Overall, how effective do you think these events are at informing people about what health services are available to them? <i>(please circle)</i>.</p> <p>Very effective Effective Quite effective Not effective Unsure</p>	
<p>2 Overall, how effective do you think these events are at giving people the confidence to access health services independently? <i>(please circle)</i>.</p> <p>Very effective Effective Quite effective Not effective Unsure</p>	
<p>3 Overall, how effective do you think these events are at helping people to manage their own health better? <i>(please circle)</i>.</p> <p>Very effective Effective Quite effective Not effective Unsure</p>	
<p>Are there any changes we could make that would improve these days for clients or agencies?</p>	
<p>How many people did you engage with today?</p>	<p>What were the most common concerns raised today?</p>
<p>Any other comments?</p>	



SPEAR is a local homelessness charity in South West London, supporting people experiencing homelessness to find a place to call home.

We provide a range of services so people experiencing homelessness can improve their health, wellbeing, skills and begin to look more positively towards an independent future.



SPEAR

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