

CASE STUDY

Bowel Screening Awareness Campaign 2017

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Scotland after lung and breast cancer. Every year, almost 4,000 people are diagnosed with the disease.

If bowel cancer is detected early enough through screening, there is a 90% chance of treating the disease successfully. For approximately every 650 people invited for regular screening, one bowel cancer death will be prevented. In Scotland this could mean the screening programme can prevent at least 150 deaths from bowel cancer each year (Scottish Government 2016).

The campaign ran from 14th November 2017 – 17th November 2017, with 6 events taking place over 5 days, covering all of the main Islands of the Outer Hebrides; Barra, Uist, Harris and Lewis.



The Aims of the campaigns were to:

- Inform and empower people to talk about bowel cancer
- Educate the community about the screening test
- Encourage people within the screening age range across the Outer Hebrides to participate in the bowel screening programme by completing their test
- Ensure islanders are aware of the signs and symptoms that could indicate there is a problem with their bowel and empower them to see their GP for advice

The Objectives being to:

- See an increase in bowel screening uptake
- Allow people to feel more knowledgeable about bowel problems and bowel screening
- See future ISD stats showing indications that cancer is being detected in early stages
- Show evidence that NHS Western Isles are meeting the Healthcare Improvement Scotland - Bowel Screening Standards



Immediate results

Although this campaign was primarily for bowel screening awareness we found that a number of health related subjects were discussed once we opened dialogue, namely sex education, healthy diet and lifestyle for children (including the effects on teeth and bowel habits) and reducing the risks of cancer for the whole family.

A large number of medical and public health professionals also attended our awareness events; ensuring that the information we were imparting was able to be passed on to those not able to attend this week and future actions encouraged going forward.

Short to long term results

It is expected that a number of adults who had previously not completed their bowel screening kits will be doing so. GP surgeries will be contacted to define whether there has been an increase in bowel related issues, we would look to see an increased uptake of bowel screening tests and an increase in early stage diagnosis of bowel cancer.

Testimonials

“Very reassuring that early detection can make such a difference to the outcome – very worthwhile event“

“Best cancer and general health awareness I have ever heard” – head of bowel cancer screening

“I learnt much more than expected. Brought home how you can take control of your body by looking after it.”

“Have heard some of the words and phrases but it is now good to know what they mean and that it (bowel cancer) can be prevented so easily”

“fun” Abigail aged 5

“Useful to know that it is the changes in our own habits/ bodies that we have to be aware of”

“I learnt a lot - better watch what I drink when I’m off to Uni. Thanks”