

# The Ovarian Cancer Awareness Project Report 2013

The Ovarian Cancer Awareness Project  
Age UK Derby and Derbyshire  
29A Market Place,  
Heanor,  
Derbyshire.  
DE75 7EG  
T: 01773 768240  
E: [Katy.Pugh@ageukderbyandderbyshire.org.uk](mailto:Katy.Pugh@ageukderbyandderbyshire.org.uk)

## Project

To deliver an outreach information and support programme to third sector organisations and community groups to promote Ovarian Cancer Awareness in women aged 50+ - 70+

Specifically we aimed to help older women:

- Recognise and respond to signs of ovarian cancer
- Alter preconceptions of the occurrence of ovarian cancer in older women
- Signpost them to relevant services and organisations
- Recruit older female volunteers and ensure they are valued and achieve personal satisfaction through promoting cancer awareness.
- Evaluate ovarian cancer awareness materials and resources for the campaign.

## Methodology: How the project was delivered

The Ovarian Cancer Awareness Project:

- Networked with existing groups, activity sessions or drop-in facilities used by women aged 50-70+ and negotiates opportunities to attend a session to deliver the Ovarian Cancer Awareness messages.
- Provided information on other services or agencies.
- Recruited, trained and supported local volunteers to deliver the message to their contacts.
- Distributed promotional materials to key points of contact eg pharmacies, shops, supermarkets and community centres.
- Promoted the Cancer Awareness messages using local media, websites, e-bulletins, e-networks and forums.

It takes a very particular range of skills coupled with real determination and a passion for empowering people with information to deliver outreach projects. Bolsover and the nearby communities present some particular challenges because of local health inequalities, availability of services and culture within the community. Our methodology included securing the particular talents and experience of the Project Worker Julie Akino who has now successfully delivered three information dissemination projects in the Bolsover area including another cancer awareness campaign. Her missionary zeal, local knowledge and personality was a key factor in how the project was delivered and its overall success.

## Background

### Outreach work

Age UK Derby and Derbyshire engages in outreach work to mitigate against the barriers to accessing services, information and signposting experienced by older people. Older people experience barriers because of issues such as:

- where they live – rural communities, lack of public transport and the cost of travel
- skills and experience – a lack of skills or engagement in IT/websites etc
- literacy – low educational levels, reverting to language of birth, visual impairment
- disability and long term conditions – hearing impairment, lack of grip to handle materials, dementia and memory loss, anxiety and confusion
- anxieties about medical conditions

Our Information and Advice Service has an Information Roadshow which delivers an outreach service across the County Council area. Roadshows are flexible, scalable and bespoke delivered in response to the needs of older people's groups, local communities and partner agencies.

Using this experience we worked on the Digital Outreach support programme during 2010/11 to support older and disabled people cope with the switchover from analogue to digital TV signals. We were notably creative and successful, exceeding targets and maximising the opportunities that the 'end user events' offered for networking older people to other services and identifying the most vulnerable. As an organisation we supported the project using local media and communications to promote key safety and awareness messages.

In 2011/12 we worked with Convey to deliver a Breast Cancer Awareness programme in Bolsover and surrounding areas as part of the North Trent Cancer Network's strategy. Using the same project worker and team approach we again were successful in promoting a challenging message to this community. The project had to be creative to network successfully and to promote widely.

In 2012/13 we were offered the opportunity to engage in further cancer awareness promotion, this time for Ovarian Cancer in women aged 50-70+

We took this step for the following reasons:

- We wanted to follow on from successful project work and use the skills, experience and local knowledge from earlier work.
- We know that many older women are at risk of ignoring signs of cancer, not taking up opportunities for screening and experiencing poor quality diagnosis and treatment often at the point of emergency admission.
- We know that older women in communities and families can be influential and spreading awareness messages via older women and volunteers can be a very effective mechanism to promote public health messages.

## **Evaluating the resources – what did older women think?**

The worker, Julie Akino, met thousands of older women during the course of the project. She experienced a good level of interest in the message and many women shared personal experiences, worries and feelings about ovarian cancer. Many of the contacts were deeply distressing and for some women the awareness message has come too late. Some women, especially those approached in groups, were too distressed to talk about cancer at all because of recent family history and bereavement. The high incidence of cancer in the Bolsover area and the close extended families and communities meant these feelings were often still raw. No women, apart from those rejecting the message because they found discussing cancer too upsetting, rejected the materials or the awareness message and many actively volunteered to help. Julie's work log records many instances of women passing on the materials to other female friends and relatives.

## **Learning from the project**

### **What went well**

The general public in Bolsover were extremely grateful for information on Ovarian Cancer as a whole. They were always quite happy to take leaflets and have a conversation.

There are always a few people that do not want to know. The worker has learnt this is usually because people choose to ignore anything that is remotely frightening to them or they have cancer or they have a relative that has cancer or has recently died. She had to be very sensitive in direct engagement with individuals and tried to offer people a choice about whether they wanted to hear the message.

Julie supported many women with self-diagnosis for themselves or family and friends by using the checklist of symptoms. She tried to encourage them to seek medical help but avoid frightening them and these conversations were often conducted in less than ideal circumstances such as at market stalls or in group settings.

### **And what could have gone better**

AUKDD found it impossible to put an advert in the Chesterfield paper on behalf of the Cancer campaign because of the local paper refusing to accept that we really were our Head Office!

The worker contacted the local paper, written by the council, for help. She did not receive any reply even with e-mails and two telephone messages.

Julie feels she would address this problem first next time and even co-ordinate with the lead organization involved at the time. In this case NTCN.

### **What did you think about the materials?**

The worker's thoughts on the materials were quite negative. The colour of the leaflets and posters are green and white and were not familiar to her as a women's cancer colour scheme. This thought continued when they had a male doctor with the logo on the leaflets.

The colour and design is more male orientated than female and in many cases when giving people leaflets they told me they did not need a leaflet as they knew about it and had sent a sample off in the post! They were of course getting confused with the Bowel cancer campaign. This did happen quite often.

Also the posters were not particularly bright for attracting people's attention in comparison to the Breast Cancer Campaign when the worker turned Bolsover pink!

The give-away materials such as pens, key rings etc were very popular and helped deliver what at times is an unpleasant message or subject to discuss and helped to attract visitors to stalls and displays.

### **What would you have done differently?**

The worker would have got the advertising in place early on and contacted all of the Health professionals first.

### **Is there anything about the timing of the campaign?**



The timing is quite poor in regards to the weather. The attendance at groups was lower and in some cases cancelled all together because of the snow. Bolsover and North East Derbyshire tends to have quite harsh winters and 2013 was no exception!



### **What would you like to recommend to the national team?**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March the BBC announced it was ovarian cancer awareness month on their breakfast programme. Which seemed strange when we had campaigned in Jan/Feb? We thought the Media campaigns should work together with local agencies as well as national.

The different colours for different cancers for leaflets and posters are very confusing, especially when not all regions receive the adverts.

The National team should perhaps keep to pink colours for female and blue for Male cancers. They could then choose a colour for cancers that effect both Male and Female.

### **Do you think this campaign improved people's knowledge of ovarian cancer?**

This campaign definitely raised people's awareness and knowledge of ovarian cancer

### **Did you see the materials out and about in GP practices and pharmacies?**

The worker did not see any materials in GP's or Pharmacies. The worker visited all GP's in the Bolsover area and briefed the practice managers. I gave them all materials, leaflets and posters. The worker visited Pharmacies and gave them posters, leaflets and cards.

## Summary of the project

The worker, Julie Akino, wrote this response:

'My last day on the project conveyed all my hopes for the circulation of this awareness campaign. I approached a lady to give her a leaflet and have a chat whilst on the market stall in Bolsover. She said thank you but I have seen this leaflet my mother gave it to me. (The mother had got it from a club I had visited earlier). One of my messages has always been please pass this message on to other female friends and family. Another lady I stopped told me she had read the leaflet at work. (She had picked up the leaflet from the adult Education centre where I had left leaflets one cold dark night).

I spoke with a lady at the bus stop just behind my stall; she said she had all the symptoms. I gave her the leaflet and asked her to visit her GP.

After all my leaflets were gone I felt a great satisfaction that all 2000 leaflets had been circulated and I decided to walk around Bolsover and place the last of my posters and cards in the few shops I had not yet visited. I called into 'The Bakers Oven' and spoke to the owner, I was just about to explain about the project and she told me that I had already stopped her a couple of weeks ago and gave her a leaflet. She was very happy to display posters and cards in her shop.

I feel quite satisfied that Bolsover was more aware of Ovarian cancer symptoms now than before.

In the hours and time that was given to me I believe I could not have done this project without the help from Katharine Wilson who covered events I could not attend due to my other commitments. The many volunteers from the voluntary groups in Bolsover and beyond and of course the Health professionals all really contributed to the coverage we have achieved in such a short time. All of these people I would like to thank.'



Julie Akino (left) meeting women at the Co-Op stall.

## Achievements

**In just 7 weeks we helped reach 4,000 women and their families and friends.**

- From confirmation of the project to start took only 4 weeks. The project ran for just 7 weeks: Start date 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013 until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013 including 1 week training and set up for materials.
- In 7 weeks we have delivered 63 ovarian cancer awareness sessions to women in the Bolsover and area communities. That's an average of 9 events each week on only 2 days a week!
- In 7 weeks we have delivered 6 ovarian cancer awareness sessions to health and social care professionals
- Overall we reached 3,000 women aged 50-70+ and influenced 1,000 relatives.
- We have recruited and cascaded information through 19 local volunteers who have supported 31 events.
- We delivered 1,300 1:1 sessions with 140 hours.
- We have offered a professional, sensitive and caring project that has promoted the independence, rights and dignity of older people.
- We have forged good relationships with staff from health and social services and other agencies and voluntary groups.



Katharine Wilson,  
AUKDD Information Roadshow Officer  
helping to spread the word

## How the project helped

### Outcome 1

Older women learn about the risks and treatment of ovarian cancer and can recognise signs of cancer.

‘One lady had already had Breast cancer and she has been having the symptoms of ovarian cancer. She was afraid to go to the doctor as she felt she was not listened to, she had a very poor experience with her breast cancer.’

‘Elders Dance group . I talked on a 1.1 basis gave them leaflets and cards. Some as usual had stories to tell of friends that had died of ovarian cancer. One lady showed me a picture of her friend who she had lost and was quite keen on showing it around the group to get the point across. The strange part in this story this same helpful lady, last year stopped me cascading information regarding Breast cancer at this group as she did not feel it appropriate at the time. This year a gentleman is in charge of the groups and he agreed I could visit’.

### Outcome 2

**Volunteers become a community resource extending the scope and scale of the project.**

‘Paula Grievson, a support worker in Bolsover, was one of the women I stopped to have a chat with. She volunteered to cascade information to the people she supports. She took a poster, 100 leaflets and cards. I also gave her the printed copy of the presentation for her to read to the end users’.

Lee Mellor is from the Derbyshire link communication office. He has agreed to circulate the leaflet and card to 787 people on an e bulletin and another 1000 people will receive information on the project by

Spoke with the Rev’d Gouldthorpe of St Mary and St Laurence, she has agreed to put up a poster and have leaflets in foyer of her church.



### Outcome 3

#### Older women aged 50-70+ recognise the signs of cancer and seek assessment and treatment with more confidence

‘Another lady aged 35 with a very swollen stomach (looks 8 months pregnant) as it is most days and had all the symptoms of Ovarian cancer she was with her mother and sister and the mother decided to go back to the doctors with her.’

‘Spoke to a lady that was worried about her sister in law. Explained blood tests and scans available and suggested she visits the GP with her. Another lady came up to talk at the same time and told the two of us she has ovarian cancer and it has just returned for the second time in her pelvis. She had ignored her pain in her lower abdomen and explained it went around to her side. This brought home the message to get the ladies sister in law to the GP’.

### Outcome 4

#### Older people are signposted to relevant organisations that may be of assistance to them.

We are able to pick up on potential problems and act on these. We have developed knowledge of services locally and generally that could be of use to the older people we meet. We can readily access other services provided by Age UK Derby and Derbyshire such as Information and Advice and Footcare for the benefit of women we meet. Feedback from the project staff, volunteers, women and carers indicate that we have regularly signposted people to relevant services and organisations.

‘Briefed Helen Walker a Health Trainer in Bolsover has taken 50+ leaflets and cards to hard to reach people, she does home visits and shelters and clinics for the homeless and isolated I have given her a presentation for her information.’



The Co-Op stall, with Age UK guides and local materials alongside the Ovarian Cancer message

## Outcome 5

### Volunteers are recruited, valued and achieve personal satisfaction through befriending.

We have a programme to recruit volunteers and to provide opportunities for people to engage in a useful and rewarding activity which supports the local community. During the project we recruited and provided training for 19 volunteers.

Rita from the Zumba class agreed to cascade information to her 10 other classes. Her life had been touched by cancer so she was very keen to help on this project. I gave her a presentation sheet, leaflets and cards. I also visited one other class she runs to give her support and advice.



Julie managed to deliver her message before it interfered with the all important Bingo!



The Bolsover Elders Dance Group in full swing

## Quality

Age UK Derby and Derbyshire has maintained the ISO 9001 quality standard since 2009. In addition individual services or areas of activity hold specialist quality standards.



## Complaints

No complaints were received during the project.

For more information about the Ovarian Cancer 'Be Clear on Cancer' message please see our website on:

[www.ageukderbyandderbyshire/ovariancancer](http://www.ageukderbyandderbyshire/ovariancancer)