

healthwatch

Blackburn with Darwen

Accessibility and Engagement of Seated & Standing Exercise
classes in Blackburn with Darwen

2020/21



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About Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen

Healthwatch England is an independent national champion for people who use health and social care services, and we are here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

At a local level, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen help residents get the best out of their local health and social care services. Whether it is improving them today, or helping to shape them for tomorrow, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is all about local voices being able to influence the delivery and design of local services. People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard.

Healthwatch was created under Health and Social Care Act, 2012. We are part of a network of local Healthwatch organisations which encourage health and social care services to involve people in decisions that affect them and how this could be improved, and we share these views with those with the power to make change happen.

Find out more at: www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk



Rationale

ELHT (East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust) Patient Participation Panel assigned Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen the task to work with the Physiotherapy Team at Barbara Castle Way to look at the current offer of seated and standing exercise classes being delivered in the Borough in order to:-

- Understand the reason why "Did Not Attend" (DNA) rates are higher for the seated classes as opposed to the standing classes (12% DNA rate in the seated class versus 0% in the standing class)
- Understand the difference in re-referral rates back to the seated class versus the standing class (7% in the seated class versus 0% in the standing class)
- Have a better understanding of the needs of the cohort of patients attending both classes to enable a patient led service design.

There are two classes currently on offer to patients who have attended the recommended course of physiotherapy. The classes are structured differently as detailed below:-

Standing

This is co-delivered by Refresh and Physiotherapists over 4 sessions at Barbara Castle Way Health Centre in Blackburn Town Centre. The four classes offer a streamlined, immediate supported transition from Physiotherapy treatment into a community exercise class and further sessions are available and led by the same Refresh staff at Blackburn Leisure Centre for a further 12 weeks. This offers the patient the opportunity to access 16 weeks of exercise in total.

Seated

This is co-delivered by Refresh and Physiotherapy staff over 6 sessions at Barbara Castle Way Health Centre in Blackburn town centre. As with the Standing sessions the 6 classes offer a streamlined and supported transition from Physiotherapy treatment to enable patients to move on to independent attendance at one of the existing seated classes in the community. However, these are not supported by physiotherapists.

Participants of both the Seated and Standing exercise classes are provided with a BEEZ card and signposted to enable them to independently attend one of the existing seated or standing exercise classes in the community. Seated classes are run by Refresh staff in the community who may not be known to the participants and physiotherapy staff do not attend. Standing classes in the community

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are run mostly by Refresh staff who also co-run the Standing classes with the Physiotherapy team, so may be known to participants.

Methodology

The Healthwatch Team worked in partnership with the ELHT PPP and the Physiotherapy Team to construct a questionnaire for patients. This was shared online via the Healthwatch website, social media, email, posted to home addresses, and sent via a participants WhatsApp group.

In addition, the questionnaire was translated into Urdu and Gujarati to specifically target older female members of BAME community for whom English may - not be their first language.

Survey Questions

1. What was the primary reason for your referral into treatment for physiotherapy?
2. Were the wider benefits of attending the free seated/standing exercise classes explained to you when you were referred by the physiotherapy team? e.g., long term improvements to health and wellbeing.
3. Were you offered a referral to any other services to address these wider issues, e.g., weight loss, mood, stress, sleep etc.
If yes, which services were you signposted to?
If no, would this have been beneficial?
4. Did you attend the exercise classes you were offered?
5. Which exercise class were you referred to attend?
6. How would you normally travel to the venue to attend the class
7. Do you experience any of the following barriers that prevented you from attending classes?
8. Which venue(s) have you attended exercise classes at?
9. How easy do you find this journey? e.g., distance from home, length of time of journey, transport cost, parking availability and costs.
10. Have you taken part in any other exercise classes, if yes where?
11. What did you enjoy the most about attending the exercise classes?
12. What did you enjoy the least about attending the exercise classes?
13. Did you feel appropriately supported by the fitness instructors running the classes?
14. Do you think the venue(s) you have attended are accessible and suitable for the exercise classes?
15. Did you experience any difficulties communicating effectively with the instructors? e.g., language barriers, hearing, sight?
16. Would it be useful to include some health education into the session?
17. What is your ethnic origin?
18. What is your age range?
19. What is your postcode?

Our Findings

- 13 patients responded to the questionnaire.
- All but one of the respondents attended the standing classes.
- All patients were referred onto the seated and standing exercise classes for pain relief, back, joint, shoulder and arm pain, sciatica, and osteoarthritis.
- 92% of respondents said the wider benefit of attending classes was explained to them e.g., long term improvements to health and wellbeing.
- 36% of respondents said they were offered a referral onto another service to assist with weight loss, mood, stress, sleep. Seven respondents stated that they were not offered this but felt that this would have been beneficial.
- 23% said they would drive themselves and 23% said they would be driven by a friend or family member. 8% would take a taxi with 31% walking and 15% using other means of transport.

46% of respondents said that they did not face any barriers to attending classes, with 8% saying time of class or childcare was an issue for them and 8% gave other for a reason, while 16% said fear of making the pain worse.

Respondents had attended Blackburn Sports Centre, Barbara Castle Way, Darwen Leisure Centre, and others had not specified.

Lack of parking was given as an issue for some, along with the cost of parking.

Only two of the respondents did any form of exercise outside of the class.

Respondents were positive about the staff, clean environment, and the positive effect it had on their pain, socialising, feeling energetic and relaxed after the class.

The only negative comments received were pain experienced after the class by one participant, the class was too short or could be held more than once a week.



10 respondents said they felt supported by staff, giving 5 stars.

All respondents said that the venues were accessible.

Only one respondent said they struggled with communication.

90% of respondents said that they would like to receive some wider health education during the sessions; healthy eating, help with relaxation, sleep and long-term management of pain and conditions

Ethnicity

One respondent was White British with the remainder all from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Age

Most respondents were in the 40-49 and 50-59 age group, with just one respondent aged 30-39 and two in the 60-69 age group.

Postcode

1 - BB3

5 - BB2

7 – BB1

Conclusion

Engaging with this group has been difficult, partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic putting a stop to the delivery of group classes. For that reason, Healthwatch approached participants with a survey which was posted out with a freepost return envelope, emailed, sent via WhatsApp, and shared on social media. Despite these efforts, engagement was poor with just 13 respondents and only one of these had attended the seated exercise classes.

Other methods to distribute the questionnaire were used including email, a WhatsApp group, shared on social media and the Healthwatch BwD website as well as being translated into Gujarati and Urdu and shared with the participants.

A Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen representative attended a class and offered to support the ladies to complete the questionnaires, but they requested to take them home. None have been returned.

When Healthwatch attended the seated exercise class, it was engaging and those in attendance were well supported. All the ladies looked to be enjoying the exercises, were enthusiastic and taking part.

In terms of progression from physiotherapy into either a seated or standing exercise class, both transitions appear to be the same. All the ladies receive the same information and signposting. The only material difference is that the Seated classes held in the community may have staff running them who are not known to the participants.

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‘I have arthritis and lots of pain every day, but I make myself get up, otherwise I feel depressed. I go to the gym, and I do exercise to make myself feel better.’

Recommendations

- Marketing literature that shows images of the exercises could be produced, translated, and handed out to patients to give them an idea of what type of exercise they would be taking part in. Share this literature with family members and friends to encourage them to support participation.
- Ensure those running the classes in the community are known to the participants before they transition across with a handover session in their last session at Barbara Castle Way
- Use confident participants’ voices to share their experience for the group and share the benefits of the exercise – these could be shared on videos on televisions in Barbara Castle Way and on social media channels.

- More investment into marketing would benefit the Physiotherapy department as a whole. A TV screen in reception could play seated exercise films amongst adverts for other services/ or talking heads of confident participants sharing their experiences.
- Work with GPs to promote the benefits of exercise to those patients frequently being re-referred for Physiotherapy, referring them to attend the Seated and Standing exercise classes instead of being referred to physiotherapy clinics.
- WhatsApp – Create short video clips of short simple exercises patients can do and send these out to encourage exercise at home and keep participants engaged in between classes.
- Source funding with a third sector partner to deliver seated exercise classes in the community and work with community groups and other interested stakeholders to open classes to a wider group. This may enable women to attend with friends and other family members.
- Social media will support the above. Tagging stakeholders in the community to encourage participation

Commented [SJ3]: Ah sorry I've added this into para above! Think it all fits together as one point. 😊