

# Consultation for the re-design of Blackburn with Darwen Health Improvement Services

## Physical Activity and Healthy Lifestyles

### Summary of key findings

*There was an excellent response to this survey with a total of 209 responses.*

Response to proposal:

#### **Re:refresh and Health Improvement Services proposal**

Currently, we have a re:refresh offer and a number of specialist health improvement services, as outlined previously.

We are proposing that we introduce a nominal fee, for example £1.00 or £1.50, for re:refresh activity sessions. Through this approach we would keep the re:refresh offer available for all, and maintain the specialist health improvement services.

#### **10. Do you support the proposed changes to re:refresh as set out above?**

Please SELECT ONE OPTION ONLY

- 19 Strongly oppose (9.9%)
- 22 Tend to oppose (11.3%)
- 29 Neither support or oppose (14.5%)
- 39 Tend to support (20.1%)
- 85 Strongly support (43.8%)

Total of 194 responses to this question (15 respondents left this question blank).

#### **Conclusion**

The majority of respondents 124 (63.9%) either strongly support or tend to support the council's proposal to introduce a nominal fee for re:refresh activities, maintain wider re:refresh offer and retain the specialist health improvement services.

**Q1 In the last 6 months, on average how often have you attended a re:refresh activity session?**

- 29% None
- 28% More than once a week
- 19% Once a week
- 16% 1 to 3 times a week
- 7% Once a month

**Q2 In the last 6 months, on average how often have you attended any activity session with a charge (including membership fees)**

- 60% None
- 13% More than once a week
- 11% 1 to 3 times a week
- 10% Once a week
- 5% Once a month

**Q3 If the Council introduced a very small fee for re:refresh activities, for example £1 or £1.50, please indicate how this change might affect your attendance**

- 74% No change
- 14% Attend less
- 5% Stop attending altogether
- 3% Other
- 2% Seek alternative activity

**Q4 Please provide any comments you have about the wider re:refresh offer and current re:refresh activities:**

There were 110 comments in response to this question

**22 respondents stated that re:refresh was very important for general health, mental health issues, weight loss, increasing physical activity and managing long term conditions**

**20 respondents stated that they had found the service to be excellent/very useful**

**Only 1 stated they were disappointed with the service**

**8 respondents stated they were happy to contribute and that charging is a more sustainable option**

**6 stated they could not afford to pay and 1 respondent stated that they felt people 'won't want to pay'**

**2 respondents commented that the Buggy Bootcamp sessions were excellent**

**3 respondents said they were unaware of re:refresh or that they needed more information**

**3 respondents found the walking and cycling programme very beneficial**

**Example of comments received:**

*Re:refresh has been an essential part of enabling to lose significant weight and get fit. It has enabled me to become more active / mobile. If I had had to pay I probably wouldn't have joined the scheme*

*I find the gym usage to be an advantage for me to be able to use, since my back operation I have tried to attend keep fit but no one took the time to understand my medical condition. Witton centre have listened and allowed me to use the gym safely.*

*I like to use the free swims and gyms*

*Important for keeping people active, but I don't think a nominal fee would be a big deal Since launch has been very successful and surely has made a big difference to general levels of health. Opinion amongst friends suggest that a number of them will attend less or stop attending altogether if a charge is imposed no matter how small it might be*

*Charge would be good. May encourage care and better services in future*

*The cycling centre is extremely useful*

*Cycling is great for me I have got out more, stopped my tablets and even met friends*

*I believe putting a charge on the services are needed to help sustain the teams. I would probably pay more towards certain specialised services*

*As I work full time I am limited to times I can attend sessions and feel like I miss out. The pool is usually over crowded at free session times preventing me from swimming lengths*

*Structured exercise activities, healthwise sessions are very important for me as I get older. The staff are very supportive and the facilities are excellent.*

*I would prefer to keep re:refresh even if it meant contributing something to the cost of current activities.*

*I find the classes very beneficial to strengthen my legs and back and improve my walking. I would be very happy to contribute the small amount each session.*

*I think the activities are needed and make a real impact on the borough's health and wellbeing due to affordable, accessible exercise as well as social inclusion for those who are isolated, lonely etc.*

*Current offer is great and holds up well compared to other local councils. £1 charge seems fair in order to keep the activities available and still a lot cheaper than elsewhere.*

**Q5 Has a health professional ever referred you to a specialist Health Improvement service?**

49% Yes  
47% No  
3% Don't know

**Q6 Have you ever attended any specialist health improvement services?**

55% Yes  
43% No  
2% Don't know

**Q7 Are you currently attending any specialist health improvement services?**

48% Yes  
51% No  
1% Don't know

**Q8 If YES please rate the quality of the specialist health improvement service you received (of those that attended)**

	Poor	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
Weight Management	3%	10%	17%	37%
Exercise Referral	3%	1%	18%	71%
Walking & Cycling	2%	5%	24%	31%
Fall Prevention	0%	4%	14%	48%
Wellbeing Service	2%	11%	13%	49%
Stop Smoking Service	6%	13%	19%	7%

**Q9 Please provide any comments you have about the specialist health improvement services available in the borough**

There were 108 comments in response to this question.

**30 respondents commented that the service was excellent/very good/good**

**13 commented that the staff were caring/exceptional/knowledgeable**

**9 respondents commented that they were unaware of the service**

**7 commented that the service had improved their confidence/motivation/health**

**4 found the post-natal service very beneficial in meeting other mums and regaining fitness and getting out of the house**

**Only 1 respondent commented that they were not impressed with the service and did not feel it was helpful**

Example of comments received:

*The trainers are all exceptional. They have an holistic approach and can give advice on healthy living. They have been an essential part of my transformation*

*It's alright but could do with more specialists*

*I attend buggy buddies with my baby at Darwen leisure centre. This really helped me to get out of the house post baby. it also helped me to get back into physical activity and regain my fitness*

*The people getting these services are benefitting and hopefully leading a healthier life - reducing the burden on the already overstretched NHS services in the borough*

*I consider it to be a vital service and one which should be provided for the people in Blackburn*

*Improved mobility, greater confidence and without this service I would be more housebound*

*Gives me something to look forward to and improves balance and coordination*

*Whilst at Darwen leisure centre had a health check. Luckily I didn't need referring to any services but it was reassuring to know they were available.*

*I found a 'mood and food' course most useful, giving me skills to tackle obesity.*

*These sessions are vital. I have physical limitations like many people and need advice so that I exercise within my capabilities.*

*I attended the Healthwise scheme for some 9 months and really benefited health wise and have been a gym member for the past 21 months which would not have happened but for all the staff of the Healthwise scheme.*

**Q10 If these health improvement services were to be stopped, what alternative would you do to improve your health and wellbeing and reduce your risk of disease?**

There were 124 comments in response to this question.

Below is a list of categories in response to the question with some comments included:-

**37 respondents stated they would walk, cycle, swim, attend yoga or take some exercise at home.**

**Examples of comments received:-**

*I would do exercise at home but you are not as motivated doing it alone.*

*I'd try to do exercises on my own, but I certainly wouldn't be as motivated. I like the fact that it was at a local leisure centre and where other people there talk to you. The instructors also made sure my baby was okay whilst I could exercise. I couldn't do that if I was on my own.*

*I would exercise on my own*

*I already go to yoga and use health supplements to keep me healthy*

*I am in the habit of looking after my health and exercise daily, unfortunately many people need support with making exercise and health a habit, this will be compromised if funding is reduced.*

*Eat better, exercise more, and use advice on the internet*

*Try to walk more – but that is more difficult in the winter*

**29 respondents stated they would do nothing or commented their health would deteriorate due to the lack of support**

*Nothing. As previously stated I tried to go to paid for classes, but all they wanted was my money*

*Would probably be depressed again*

*Have no choice to stop the exercises I am doing and my health will deteriorate and again the quality of life will be affected*

*Would be very sorry. Health and mobility would deteriorate. I would probably have more falls*

*No other service is appropriate to me*

*No alternative*

**19 respondents commented they did not know what they would do if the services were stopped.**

**Examples of the comments**

*I wouldn't know how to access help and a cost would probably be involved. I would probably go back to needing a blue badge.*

*I would have less alternatives if this was stopped*

*Don't know I attend because there is reason to go.*

*I would need to go back to take advice i.e. back to GP and hospital referral*

*I don't know – I am unaware of anything similar and so particularly appropriate for me. I think my risk of falling would increase significantly*

*No idea I couldn't have done it alone*

**17 of the respondents commented they would continue with some form of exercise the majority mentioning they would be willing to pay**

*Continue with exercise elsewhere*

*Paid classes and things at home*

*I'd attend the gym, however, I know that my grandma would struggle and her health would deteriorate*

*I already joined a gym and I now pay monthly as it is more convenient and less crowded*

*I would access other activities as my income allows me too but for many at my classes they would not be able too. It will mean poorer outcomes for the poor*

### **3 comments mentioned alternative methods of seeking exercise**

2 comments referred to using the internet

1 comment on use the Your Choice Your Support service

There were 19 miscellaneous comments mainly supporting the services and expressing the impact a reduction in service provision would have on their health.

#### **A final comment from a service user:-**

*If it had not been for the staff of the Healthwise Team I would not have taken up gym membership after having to leave the team and with no doubt whatsoever I would now be obese. It is only with being coached into eating more healthy and physical exercise training that I am not and would like to pass on my thanks and gratitude for their patience in keeping more healthy.*

### **Q11 Do you support the proposed changes to the re:refresh programme as set out above?**

43.8%	Strongly Support
20.1%	Tend to Support
14.95%	Neither support or oppose
11.34%	Tend to Oppose
9.79%	Strongly Oppose

### **Q12 If you have an alternative option which you would like the council to consider please state your suggestions(s) below**

There were 44 responses to this question with a range of responses from introducing reduced rate memberships and 'cheap passes' to increasing council tax contributions to fund the maintenance of the re:refresh scheme. 7 respondents suggested that the scheme be left as it is. An example of the suggestions are included below:

Charge for specialist services as well to give them value - pay up front for the whole course of sessions

Cover the shortfall by an increase in the council tax - this suggestion will certainly motivate borough residents to consider their health and their efforts to improve it!

To continue as we are where apparatus is used e.g. bikes, mats etc a nominal charge to be applied.

Reduced membership fee (for reduced hours/times, not currently used much) on a month by month basis like at Preston

May be some activities could still be provided free of charge or to certain groups of people - e.g. unemployed people, GP referrals where there is a high health need. Some activities such as walking require very little financial outlay if led by volunteers other than publicity - perhaps these could still be free

More focus on young children and families, we need to be pro active not reactive. Educate people and they will be able to look after their own health and well being

Pay for specialist services Surely they are most expensive and niche Keep refresh free for all

Have the first 6 weeks free then introduce the nominal fee for the remaining 6 weeks. any additional wks would be gradually added in cost so that no one is discouraged to continue.

Could consider an annual membership fee for the Re:refresh card in addition to the charges? Not sure if additional income would help but it might cover the cost of producing the cards? Annual scheme / card could be renewed each year. This could include a short Q/A about how people intend to use the scheme and then this could be monitored.

### **Q13 If you have any other comments, please provide these below**

In total there were 52 responses.

### **There were a number of comments regarding the introduction of charging, eight specifically criticising the introduction and eight supporting it**

Example of comments as follows:-

#### **Criticising**

*Not everyone can afford to make a minimal payment, it would be a shame to lose the service*

*I personally think the charge would stop some people attending, although I would attend with a charge. I think no charge is an incentive*

*The scheme allows people with finance limitations to attend regardless*

*Free swimming for kids is essential. Encourages future generations to stay healthy and is something for kids to do in a town where facilities are limited*

#### **Supporting**

*Keep services running I would pay more*

*No one will miss a £1*

*People do not mind paying for services but the price has to be right*

*A small charge for a longer benefit seems reasonable and gives service value and credibility*

### **There were a small number of comments stating the reduction in funding would increase costs to other public sector budgets:-**

*Ultimately cost the tax payer more. It would have a negative impact on health*

*If falls Re:refresh was stopped I would likely need medical attention and A&E support*



*Please consider how much it will cost the NHS to look after people if there is no service of this kind*

**There were two suggestions on how to improve services:-**

*Reduce the monthly cost and introduce a family membership where everyone in the house can benefit all your sessions without multiple memberships*

*I wonder how many people know enough about the superb range of services available.... There is so much information out there – marketing and publicity are key as is the volunteering service .....everything is concentrated in the centre/south of the Borough*

**There were 17 comments stating the service they had received was good for example:-**

*I think it has been a wonderful initiative designed to help health and wellbeing and would be a tragic loss if it disappears*

*Really enjoy sessions*

**The stop smoking service feedback from the consultation**

Question 7 of the consultation asked

**Are you attending any specialist health improvement service Yes or No**

If the answer was yes the respondent then had to indicate which service(s) they were referred to by ticking a box(s) of the services they were attending. This question also allowed the respondent to tick *did not attend*.

Responses for the stop smoking service totalled thirty one. Of these thirty one a large number (17) of the respondents indicated they had not attended the stop smoking service.

A number of these responses indicated they had attended other services which would suggest they may not have been referred to the stop smoking service. However, this assumption cannot be verified from the information of the consultation.

The data therefore analysed is from the remaining fourteen responses which includes information on the quality of the stop smoking service provision they received.

**Gender of the respondents**

50% of the respondents were male

36% of the respondents were female

14% did not answer this question

**Age of respondents**

14% were aged 30-39 years

14% were aged 40-49 years

22% were aged 50-59 years

22% were aged 60-69 years

7% were aged 70-79 years

7% were aged 80 + years

14% did not specify their age.

**The postcodes supplied from the respondents indicate they are from various wards within the Borough for example:-**

Ewood, Beardwood & Lammack, Audley, Roe Lee and Mill Hill

**Ethnicity of the respondents**

79% White/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British

7% Mixed/Multi ethnic groups White and Black Caribbean

14% did not respond

**The quality of the stop smoking service was also recorded, the following are the results from the respondents:-**

14% of the respondents indicated the service was excellent

43% indicated the service was very good

29% indicated the service was satisfactory

14% indicated the service was poor.

Therefore, a majority of the respondents 57% reported the service was very good or excellent.

**Summary of the responses**

The respondents who completed the consultation of the stop smoking service provision ranged in age from 30-80 years and resided in various wards of the Borough. The ethnicity of the cohort was mainly white/British. The quality of the service they experienced was reported as very good or excellent. However, the data from the consultation regarding the stop smoking service is limited.

**Demographics**

**Male            30.7%**

**Female         69.2%**

**7% respondents gender identity is different to the one on their original birth certificate**

**Age – even spread of ages from 30-80+    8% 15-29yrs**

**94.27%         White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British**

- 0.5%** Asian / Asian British – Indian
- 2%** Asian / Asian British – Pakistani
- 0.5%** Asian / Asian British- Chinese
- 0.5%** White & Black Caribbean
- 2%** Any other mixed/multi ethnic background

**1% of respondents were pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks**

**29.7% considered themselves to have a disability**

**Postcode analysis (of those that completed PC box)**

<b>BB1</b>		<b>BB2</b>		<b>BB3</b>		<b>Outside BwD</b>	
BB1	2	BB2	2	BB3 0	8	BB5	7
BB1 1	2	BB2 1	2	BB3 1	9	BB6	2
BB1 2	9	<b>BB2 2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>BB3 2</b>	<b>17</b>	PR5	1
BB1 3	6	BB2 3	4	<b>BB3 3</b>	<b>20</b>	PR6	1
BB1 4	4	<b>BB2 4</b>	<b>19</b>	BB3 4	1	BL7	2
BB1 5	7	BB2 5	9	BB3 9	1	BB11	1
BB1 6	3	BB2 6	8				
BB1 7	1	<b>BB2 7</b>	<b>13</b>				
BB1 8	8						
BB1 9	7						

**Living situation**

- 57%** Co-habiting (living) with partner
- 28%** Live alone
- 11%** Parent/Carer living with at least one child under 16
- 3%** Student living with parents/carers