



Report on the 14TH PRESTON HEALTH MELA

Saturday 18th April 2015

Venue : University of Central Lancashire, Preston

This 14th consecutive Health Mela was held in Preston on Saturday 18th April 2015 in the University of Central Lancashire's Foster building. Special thanks go to Professor Romesh Gupta OBE Chair of the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing and Mr Russell Hogarth, Chair of the Creative Communities Group for organising of the event. Many different organisations contributed greatly to its success in promoting community health and wellbeing.

This year's theme was 'Long Term Conditions, in particular Obesity and Diabetes'.

As noted above, this is the 14th Mela to be held in Preston. Since 2001, over thirty five Health Melas have been held in the North West and elsewhere – the farthest afield being in Uttar Pradesh in

India. In the past three years alone, we have provided a showcase for health and wellbeing exhibitors in Leyland, Bolton, Bradford and the Fylde Coast. Last year's Preston Health Mela was held at the prestigious Guild Hall.

Introduction

The origins of the annual Preston Health Mela go back to 2001, when a group of health care professionals and executive members of the Preston Gujarat Hindu Society (GHS), led by Professor Romesh Gupta OBE and Ishwer Tailor JP MBE DL, set up the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum. This was designed to improve health education and access to health information for the local south Asian community. The event was planned to promote healthy living and

built on the idea that a Mela (a gathering or festival) provides an opportunity to mobilise the community to take an active and enjoyable part in securing its own health and wellbeing. Over the years the scope of the Health Mela has expanded to become a multi-ethnic event taking in all sections of the community and it has become an annual fixture in the Preston calendar.

Following the success of the Health Mela in Preston, and the extension of the concept to Bolton, Leyland Bradford, the Fylde coast, Manchester, London and so on another major milestone has been the acquisition in 2013 of a permanent office in the Bolton One building at the Centre for Research in Health and Wellbeing at the University of Bolton. This now functions as the home base of the organisation.

The 2015 Health Mela in Preston drew together large numbers of health professionals, voluntary organisations, committed individuals and local students from the University who worked together to promote healthy living in the community. It has been noted in previous reports that the Preston model provides a valuable reference point of national significance for those committed to community involvement in the promotion of health and wellbeing. The Preston Health Mela is increasingly used by community leaders as a flagship on which to model engagement programmes.



Breakfast Meeting

The breakfast meeting has become a vital part of the Health Mela and it gives an opportunity for health care professionals, academics and community leaders to network and discuss issues of local and national significance. Long term conditions, in particular obesity and diabetes was the topic for discussion.

Welcoming the delegates Professor Lynne Livesey, Pro Vice-Chancellor of UCLAN, said that this event represented the start of an exciting new era of partnership between the University and the organisers, the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing associated with Rotary International. Professor Romesh Gupta OBE, Chairman of NFHW thanked Professor Livesey and UCLAN for hosting the event and invited chief guest Dr Lance Sandle, Vice-President of the Royal College of Pathologists to address the meeting. Dr Sandle noted the importance of providing opportunities for the public to be involved in monitoring their own health and wellbeing. Mr Stuart Heys, Chairman of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust chaired the meeting. Invited guests, leaders of the community, health and local service providers joined in and shared their views.

The Health Mela

Over 1500 visitors attended the Preston Health Mela. This was an increase of 400 compared to last year. The staff manning the registration desk were inundated with a flock of visitors that increased by the hour. Attendance figures are an indication of the Mela's excellent reputation in the promotion of health and wellbeing for all.

This year saw a maximum intake of more than 70 health related stalls. They represented NHS, local authority, and other health related organisations. There was additional input from health trusts, voluntary bodies, pharmaceutical and medical diagnostic companies and commercial organisations.

Visitors to the annual Health Mela were given advice, information and support with regards to health and wellbeing at the stalls. As part of the many activities throughout the day, which ranged from a colouring competition for children to the opportunity to learn about health related organisations in the community, there was also the added bonus of having a Health MOT.

Visitors also had an opportunity to sample the complementary therapies of



Reiki, Yoga and Head massage in sessions organised by professional practitioners.

The Teddy Bear Clinic and the Health Mela Tree were also very popular and many visitors left their health messages on the tree. The importance of Health and Safety at work and home including the use of eye protection, goggles and gloves was demonstrated. There was a constant buzz around the smoothie bike. This demonstrated a healthy way of using the energy of cycling and the delicious fruits provided, to make healthy fruit smoothies.

The Health Mela and older people

The Health Mela's have proven time and time again that they don't just cater for children, teens and young adults. As we get older our health may deteriorate and a section of the exhibition addressed older people and the health issues they may encounter.

This section of the event predominantly focused on health assessment and medicine management and many patients and carers found this beneficial. Health topics addressed included the Falls Prevention Pathway, Osteoporosis, Dementia and the role of the voluntary sector organisations including Age Concern.

The Health Mela enabled on-going discussion about topics specific to Older Person's health and wellbeing. Plans for future events have been scheduled to build on this and to offer Bone Health Assessment and a more detailed focus on Medicine Management.

NFHW is very proud to have supported the Falls and Fracture Prevention Service at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust which has this year received the Special Governors' Award.

Health checks

We all see our GP from time to time but are we totally assured our health is in good condition? During the Health MOT, visitors have their height, weight, BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol level and blood glucose checked. Following the tests a qualified health practitioner assesses them and provides specific health advice.

The following are the summary results of the Health MOT:

- **Total no screened for various health checks: 213**
- **Total no of counselling: 149 (70%)**
- **Abnormal Result = 39 of which**
- **Raised BG > 7.0 in subjects without DM = 8**
- **Poor control of DM = 2**
- **Raised BP (> 150/90) = 6**
- **Raised cholesterol > 6 = 23**
- **More than 52 hearing tests were carried out.**



Awards of NFHW Fellowships

These are given to individuals and organisations in recognition of their work and efforts towards the achievements of the aims and objectives of the Forum. The Mela committee were delighted to present the award of fellowship of the NFHW to Mr Russell Hogarth.

Russell is an active member of the University community and helps to co-ordinate events in and around the campus under the title 'Creative Communities Group' (CCG). He has helped to facilitate the Melas over the course of several years and enabled them to reach more people in the health and wellbeing sectors of the community; especially at UCLAN. Russell helps in

other organisations around the city of Preston and these wide achievements earned him a fellowship award this year.

Russell spoke, upon receiving this accolade: *"It was very humbling and totally unexpected. I'm truly honoured they value my contribution to the organisation and for the very kind words everybody said."*

Reception by the Governors of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals

Governors and the senior management team of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust set up a reception area where free refreshments were offered. Visitors were able to talk with them in a friendly environment and

provide constructive feedback to improve the services offered by the Trust.

Comments on the day

Chief guest Dr. Lance Sandle, Vice - president for Professionalism of the Royal College of Pathologists

"These events represent much more than a chance to look inside healthcare provision: don't make the mistake of regarding them as "open days"! These represent a chance for the public to both access and engage with services in a practical way that is of immediate value to their health. Following my initial address at the breakfast meeting about access to Point of Care Testing, I was shown the Mela facility for the event which demonstrated exactly how it should be done. No wonder these events are both valued and popular."

Professor Romesh Gupta, Chairman of the NFHW said: *"We are delighted to move to these new premises and build on our partnership with this premier university of the northwest. We hope that together we can work towards improving the health and wellbeing of the local community. We are thrilled that the students from the various disciplines will have the opportunity of working alongside other healthcare professionals to share experience and knowledge."*

Roger Mason Rotary District Governor said: *"Rotarians are leaders in their communities exchanging ideas as to the best ways to serve their communities. Health Melas are a very positive way to take action and help those that need*





support. Rotarians in Cumbria and Lancashire are delighted to support these Health Melas and work with a whole community of Health Professionals. The service provides a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of many people."

Dr Ann Hoskins, Interim Regional Director of Public Health/Director of Children, Young People and Maternity Services, North West has these encouraging words of support with a strong emphasis on the local aspect of the event: *"It is good to see the Health Mela going from strength to strength and providing such a useful opportunity for local communities and individuals to learn more about their own health and local health services."*

Mr Russell Hogarth said: *"The event itself was indeed a tremendous success. The feedback that I received throughout the day and via social media has been truly remarkable. It was definitely a team effort and a great example of collaboration between UCLAN and the community".*

Publicity

The event was systematically publicised through News Releases to media outlets, including newspapers, radio and television. This helped promote much helpful coverage both before and after



A BIG THANK YOU to all volunteers involved in the Reiki Taster Session. A total of 17 people attended the session receiving very positive and wonderful feedback from them all.



Our Partner organisations in the Health Mela

The major partners associated with this Health Mela were:

- **The University of Central Lancashire**
- **The Rotary – Cumbria and Lancashire**
- **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**
- **Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**
- **The Gujarat Hindu Society and their volunteers**
- **Creative Communities Group**
- **Preston City Council**
- **Roche diagnostics**
- **The 'Blood Drop' team from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals**
- **'Health Olympics Team' Medical students from the University of Manchester**
- **The University of Bolton**
- **Holistic Living Group, Preston**

the event. Advantage was also taken of local health domains such as pharmacies and doctors surgeries and posters and flyers were distributed to these areas.

A highly efficient team put up Mela posters around the University campus.

We had the support of the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. They played an important part in helping the Health

Mela to run successfully not least by cascading information about the event to their own contacts.

Feedback from exhibitors and visitors

The feedback from the visitors and the exhibitors was very positive and encouraging. The new spacious facility at UCLAN was very much liked. All the exhibitors would like to participate in the next event in 2016. Visitors appreciated the spacious venue and the lay out which allowed people in wheelchairs and those with prams to go around comfortably. Everyone enjoyed the refreshments offered by the Governors of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Once again, the Health Mela delivered on its promises. Recognising the number of people entering the Foster Building at



UCLAN made everyone involved appreciate the communities' willingness to learn and engage with the exhibitors. It served as an excellent platform for networking as Health and Social Care students from the University interacted with exhibitors and members of the public to discuss health related concerns and to provide medical information and guidance. We can all learn from each other in this type of engaging and inspiring environment.

The public had fun on the exercise bike which made smoothie drinks. They could take time out from the frantic crowds and have a Reiki session. They commented that the Health MOT was an excellent opportunity to be checked out and have expert advice on how to improve their lifestyle.

Acknowledgement:

Health Melas cannot be delivered by one single person. Thanks must go to all the members of the NFHW, Rotary (in particular members of the Rotary Clubs of Preston Guild and Leyland) and

everybody else who contributed to make this event a success. The 100% commitment of all the partner organisations, the time spent preparing and presenting their work hasn't gone unnoticed. Their contributions are highly valued and we hope that they will continue to support us in future.

We were privileged and honoured to have UCLAN as the host location for the Mela in 2015. Special thanks goes to honorary fellow Russell Hogarth who played an important role in engaging the University.

The organisers of the Health Mela greatly appreciate the time and effort freely given by the exhibitors to ensure the success of the event.

Additional support in the form of materials and equipment was provided by Roche.

The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing and the Health Mela movement

Involving communities in a meaningful way in the pursuit and promotion of their own health and wellbeing has been the primary objective of the Health Mela since its inception in 2001. The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing has worked in accordance with this principle, enabling it to have a realistic structure and reach the hearts and minds of urban communities. Partnerships with local Rotary Clubs, Universities, Schools and other organisations help to spread the message and the concept. These ideas can also assist other groups who are considering putting on their own Health Mela. 

If you or your organisation or community would like to get involved in this exciting journey, please contact the Secretary at the address below for details:

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