

Overview of Findings of Phase One of West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership Health Behaviour Survey

Background

The development of the West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership Single Outcome Agreement for 2009-2011 in 2009¹ involved sourcing and establishing health improvement outcome indicators. The process identified a gap in available health behaviour data. This type of data will support monitoring the impact of current community health programmes within the 15% most deprived areas and in turn their contributions towards reducing health inequalities. A survey was commissioned by West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership to address these issues. The survey was undertaken within a specific set of communities in West Dunbartonshire and is the first time local data has been available at this targeted level.

Phase two of the survey will be undertaken in spring 2011 in order to provide comparisons and identify any changes in health behaviour. A report on the final survey findings (phase 1 & Phase 2) will be published later in 2011.

¹ West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership. West Dunbartonshire Single Outcome Agreement 2009-(2009) available at <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-your-council/single-outcome-agreement/?locale=en>

The following presents an overview of the key findings from phase 1 of the survey:

Survey Aims

1. To provide a baseline of four health behaviours in the 15% lowest SIMD households in West Dunbartonshire.
2. To provide information to assist monitoring and targeting of health improvement programmes.

Methods

A postal questionnaire was designed to provide baseline data for the following outcome indicators for the West Dunbartonshire Single Outcome Agreement.

- Percentage decrease in adults consuming more than the recommended weekly amount of alcohol in the (15% most deprived areas).
- Percentage decrease in adults who smoke (in 15% most deprived areas).
- Percentage increase in adults undertaking moderate physical activity at least 5 times per week (in 15% most deprived areas).
- Percentage decrease in adults consuming four or more high fat snacks per day (in 15% most deprived areas).

In order to enable additional detail to be gathered on the four identified topic areas of physical activity, nutrition and diet, alcohol and smoking; additional questions were included in the survey. The

questions ranged from how ex smokers had quit smoking to fruit and vegetable consumption.

Respondents

The response of 941 returns equates to an 8.4% response rate. This sample provides a sampling error of $\pm 3.16\%$. This means, for example, that if 50% of respondents report being smokers, the real figure will be in a narrow range, from only 46.84% to 53.16%.

Key Findings

Smoking

Respondents were asked whether they smoked and if so how many cigarettes. For ex smokers intention to stop and method of quitting also explored.

- 34.5% of respondents reported being smokers.
- 70% of the smokers reported smoking between 6 and 20 cigarettes daily.
- This survey reports a much lower percentage of smokers who are heavily addicted i.e. those who reported that they smoke more than 20 cigarettes per day.
- Almost half of the reported smokers stated that they had absolutely no plans to quit smoking. However almost one third of smokers did report that they were thinking of quitting within the next six months and half of these reported that they were thinking of quitting smoking within the next month.
- Almost 75% of ex smokers reported quitting through will power

Physical Activity

Respondents were asked about the amount and frequency of physical activity they participated in. Barriers to participation in physical activity was also explored.

- 39.4% of respondents met the national recommendations of five days of moderate activity of at least thirty minutes daily.
- Women were more likely to report meeting the recommended levels than men with 45.1% of female respondents reporting this compared to 32% of men.
- Two thirds of respondents reported that they wanted to be more physically active with women more likely than men to express this opinion.
- In terms of what would help them to be more physically active, the majority of respondents identified more facilities followed by cheaper cost and safer walking routes.

Alcohol Consumption

- (13.6 %) of the respondents reported that they drank more than the recommended weekly limits of 14 units for females and 21 units for males.
- Women (21.8%) were more likely to report drinking more than the recommended limits compared to men (16%).
- More women reported drinking alcohol three to five times per week than males.
- Over one in five respondents reported that they never drank alcohol.

Nutrition

- 7.1% of respondents reported eating four or more high fat snacks per day.
- 40.9% of respondents reported that they consumed their five a day portions of fruit and vegetables.
- More women (47.8%) than Men (29.5%) reported having 5 a day.
- 51.6% of respondents reported having a BMI of above 25 which is classified as overweight.
- There was no difference recorded between the percentages of males and females and BMI status.
- The highest proportion of respondents reporting a BMI of over 30, which is classified as obese, was the 55-64 year age group (n=57, 34.5%).

Discussion

In terms of reported smoking status the findings are similar to the NHS GG & C Health and Wellbeing Survey 2008. However consideration may need to be given to the high number of ex smokers from this survey who reported that they quit by willpower. This may need to be explored in terms of informing current smoking cessation service provision.

Although just over a third of respondents reported meeting the recommended levels of weekly physical activity a large proportion of respondents reported that they would like to be more physically active. Therefore a key area of work for targeted physical activity programmes need to be around supporting individuals movement through the cycle of change e.g. from not thinking about being more physically active to considering becoming more active.

Reported rates of weekly alcohol consumption are higher than the NHS GG & C Health and Wellbeing Survey 2008 with more women than men reporting drinking alcohol 3/5 times per week. These findings may require revisiting assumptions e.g. binge drinking and young people with consideration given on how best to use the findings to target alcohol programmes effectively in terms of gender.

Just under half of respondents reported consuming the recommended 5 a day portions of fruit and vegetables. Over half of all respondents were found to have a BMI calculation of over 25 (classified as overweight). This suggests the need to ensure

community food programmes focus on food literacy and food confidence in order to influence healthy food choices.

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