

HEALTH WORKSHOPS FOR DEAF PEOPLE

Deaf people were able to gain information about health issues in their own language (British Sign Language) at two workshops in Wolverhampton's ABCD area recently. The people who attended were very enthusiastic and seized the opportunity to question the various speakers.

The workshops were organised by Zebra Access, a non profit company run by two Deaf women to give Deaf people greater access to all areas of life. Marilyn Bueno Del Carpio and Nikki Stratton provide workshops and courses for Deaf people and Deaf Awareness Training to charities and voluntary organisations. All this is free to the participants. The Health Workshops were funded by ABCD Community Development which was established for the benefit of the people of south east Wolverhampton and were held at the Graiseley Recreation Centre in the area.

Janet Smith, the Equality and Diversity Manager from the Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust explained the services provided and the present and future provision for Deaf people. The participants asked her many questions and made clear their dissatisfaction at the difficulty they have getting interpreters, not just for emergencies but for inpatients and outpatients. This has been an ongoing problem for many years. Ms Smith also invited participants to take part in the Trust's Open Forum, where they could put their views.

Cath Cunningham, Assistant Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust explained the various facilities available in the community and new developments in the area. She also answered questions.

There were also talks and discussions on specific health topics; Breast Cancer by Sylvia Thompson and Pat Roberts of 'Breast Cancer Action Group, Diabetes by Brenda Millington and 'Healthy Living by Niki Beardsmore of Graiseley recreation centre. Participants were also able to have an induction tour of the centre's facilities. The participants said they found the workshops very useful and asked Zebra access to provide further workshops on other health topics.

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