



South West London Health and Wellbeing Days 2024/25 Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY KEY FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

OUR USERS



1677

attendees at events

OUR EVENTS



24

events held (across 11 venues)

Service users completing a feedback form said:



80%

rated the event as
excellent
or good



76%

have a better
understanding of
how to access a
**GP, dentist or
therapeutic
support**



73%

**feel more
confident**
in accessing
primary
healthcare
services



76%

feel more able to
**manage their
own health**

Agencies completing a feedback form said:



83%

said events were
effective at
**informing people
about health
services**



78%

said events were
effective at
**improving
confidence
to access** primary
healthcare services



70%

said events were
effective at
**helping attendees
to better manage
their own health**



61

**health and
wellbeing
agencies**
participated in
the events

1. Introduction

SPEAR, a homelessness charity operating in South West London, successfully hosted 24 Health and Wellbeing Days aimed at improving healthcare access for individuals experiencing homelessness and those facing severe health inequalities. Funded by the South West London NHS Integrated Care System (SWL ICS) with a grant of £230,460, these events served as critical engagement opportunities between rough sleepers and essential health services.

2. Project overview

Between April 2024 and March 2025, 1677 attendees engaged with healthcare providers across 22¹ events held at 11 community venues. The program expanded on previous outreach efforts, offering a holistic, person-centred approach that addressed barriers to healthcare, encouraged early intervention, and empowered participants to better manage their health. The project aimed to meet the following outcomes:

1. People experiencing homelessness will report feeling better informed about available health services.
2. People experiencing homelessness will have a greater understanding of how to access primary healthcare services.
3. People experiencing homelessness report improved confidence in accessing primary healthcare services.
4. People experiencing homelessness have a positive outcome from engaging

with healthcare services at our Health and Wellbeing Days.

Research and evaluation was undertaken to assess the extent to which these outcomes were met.

3. Key achievements

SERVICE USERS' FEEDBACK

76% reported better awareness of available health services.

73% gained improved understanding of how to access primary healthcare (GP, dentist, therapeutic support).

76% felt more confident in engaging with healthcare services.

80% rated the events as either excellent or good.

AGENCY FEEDBACK

83% believed the events effectively informed attendees about available health services.

78% stated that events enhanced participants' confidence in accessing healthcare.

70% felt the events helped attendees better manage their own health.



¹ SPEAR delivered 24 events but data, including attendance figures, was collected at 22 of the events..

4. Achieving outcomes (intended and unintended)

OUTCOME 1:

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS WILL REPORT FEELING BETTER INFORMED ABOUT AVAILABLE HEALTH SERVICES.

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that this outcome has been achieved and that the project has expanded participants' knowledge beyond basic primary care awareness. The events have successfully "opened the door" to a wide range of health services and treatment pathways that many attendees were previously unaware of and would have been unlikely to encounter independently. A good example of this is the provision of complementary therapeutic services such as meditation and massage that sit outside of traditional NHS health services but offer alternative treatment options.



*"Help at hand -
the nurse helped me
with my eye problem,
and the meditation session
was enjoyable."*

Attendee



*"I like the meditation class
they provided as
I have previously
done meditation
at SPEAR before."*

Attendee

Crucially the information provided goes beyond telling people about available provision and educates people about their entitlement to services reinforcing their worth as valued community members deserving of care.

OUTCOME 2:

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS WILL HAVE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO ACCESS PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICES.

While most attendees already possessed basic knowledge of how to access primary healthcare, the project has added significant value by providing practical, immediate support. SPEAR's ability to help unregistered individuals sign up with GPs and access emergency dental care "in the moment" ensures people leave events with concrete next steps rather than just information.



"I didn't have a GP but now with help from SPEAR I have access to a GP."

Attendee



"Have just signed up with a GP, so I am confident this will help me manage my health."

Attendee



"I didn't have recourse to public funds but the nurse from here helped me with a form so that I don't have to pay for my medicines."

Attendee



"We had a Kurdish man turn up with pus coming out of his eye which we suspected was TB so we arranged him an emergency hospital appointment there and then."

Agency

OUTCOME 3:

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS REPORT IMPROVED CONFIDENCE IN ACCESSING PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICES.

There is clear evidence to indicate that this outcome has been met and, in some cases, exceeded. The direct contact with health and social care professionals serves to "demystify healthcare processes and systems" while reducing anxieties - both key components of building confidence. Additionally, the emphasis on helping people understand they are "deserving of treatment" and "worthy and valued" members of society directly addresses the psychological and emotional barriers that often prevent engagement with healthcare services. Most significantly, the project has developed a core group of health and wellbeing day attendees who feel they are more able to manage their own health independently which is a powerful indicator of improved confidence.



OUTCOME 4:

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS HAVE A POSITIVE OUTCOME FROM ENGAGING WITH HEALTHCARE SERVICES AT OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAYS.

This outcome has clearly been achieved, with strong evidence showing that most participants had very positive experiences. This is evidenced by the statistics; 80% of attendees rated the events as excellent or good, while 25% said no improvements were needed when asked how events could be better - by far the most common response. This high level of satisfaction was also affirmed through comments made in the focus groups and survey comments showing that the events are successfully creating positive healthcare experiences.

The healthcare services are delivered in an enabling way, with 72% of attendees (386) saying they felt better able to manage their own health after participating.



"I rate the health and wellbeing day very highly, as it enables us to avail ourselves of all the local services on offer, and we're able to meet with people we're familiar with."

Attendee



"Keep doing the same. I cannot fault how helpful and informative and excellent it was."

Attendee





This shows that the Health and Wellbeing Days don't just help in the moment but empower people to take better care of themselves going forward.

Most importantly, the impact goes far beyond typical healthcare provision. In some cases, attending these events has been transformational and is described as 'life-saving'.



"This service is a life saver for many situations physically and mentally."

Attendee

This demonstrates the powerful effect that respectful, coordinated healthcare can have when it's provided in an environment that values dignity and inclusion, and provides whole-person support.



"SPEAR have everything you need for a re-start. It's life changing, I hope I can return the favour in long-run."

Attendee



"Happy with the service, it has been brilliant. You don't have to come and do this but it comes from the heart and soul and you want to help people like me. It motivates me to look after myself more so I can be in the same position as you!"

Attendee

Unintended outcomes achieved by the project

The evaluation identified that there were three unintended outcomes achieved by the project:

UNINTENDED OUTCOME 1:

VOLUNTEERS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE HAVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE AND BENEFIT FROM THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAYS

All volunteers attending the focus group had previously been service users themselves before transitioning into volunteering. They highlighted how volunteering provided structure, purpose, and social engagement, helping them maintain stability in their own lives.

Volunteers reported receiving training, such as First Aid and Safeguarding, which helped them support others effectively. As a result, they are able to play an essential role whilst also benefiting themselves. Their roles include

- **Promoting events in the local area** (e.g. placing leaflets in hotspots).
- **Setting up and organizing the space** (e.g. preparing goodie bags, moving tables, help with catering).

Lived-experience volunteers play a crucial role in brokering interactions between attendees and professionals. This is crucial given that a significant barrier to service engagement stems from attendees reluctance to participate, often rooted in previous

negative experiences with healthcare professionals. These past encounters can create anxiety and erode confidence, making individuals hesitant to seek help initially. As such use of volunteers with lived experience is essential to the delivery model, as this particularly helps to build trust which may be a deciding factor about whether someone takes up the support on offer.

UNINTENDED OUTCOME 2:

IMPROVED SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND SENSE OF BELONGING FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Whilst the primary focus of the events was to address health inequalities one of the most significant impacts of the events has been the creation of a 'community' that people feel they belong to. For many this sense of community is something that is absent from their day-to-day lives. The importance in social connection was consistently raised by participants as an essential and highly valued aspect of the Health & Wellbeing Days with many people making the connection between social interaction and its ability to lift spirits and ease anxieties.



"Collaborating across all the services means that we know who to signpost people to."

Agency

UNINTENDED OUTCOME 3:

COLLABORATION BETWEEN AGENCIES

The Health and Wellbeing Days have facilitated partnership approaches and sharing knowledge of how to support people experiencing homelessness.

Many of the agencies reported benefits from being in the same room as each other which has led to some partnership working and learning from each other.



"Always good to work with partners for screening sessions."

Agency



"Great to meet other providers and look at how to work together."

Agency

There is also evidence that as a result of attending the Health and Wellbeing days some organisations have adapted their services to better meet the needs and requirements for people experiencing homelessness. For example, the KVA Good Food Group has made more spaces available where people can go and prepare food in recognition that people experiencing homelessness do not have access to kitchens. They are also creating a rough sleepers leaflet to raise awareness of their service to rough sleepers.

5. SUCCESS FACTORS

Several elements contributed to the success of the Health and Wellbeing Days, including:

1 A safe and welcoming environment

Use of community venues and a café style environment created an informal atmosphere that reduced anxiety and mistrust of healthcare services.

2 Experienced staff and volunteers

Many SPEAR volunteers have lived experience, fostering trust and engagement with attendees.

3 Consistency and regularity

Attendance figures increased over time as community members became more familiar with the events.

4 Holistic approach

Services provided covered multiple health needs in one place, reducing fragmentation in healthcare delivery.

5 Social interaction opportunities

Events combated loneliness and isolation, offering additional emotional and social support beyond medical services.

6 Multi-agency collaboration

Strengthened partnerships and service coordination led to better health interventions for attendees.

6. Recommendations for future delivery and research

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Secure long-term funding**
Ensure ongoing financial support for the continuation and expansion of Health and Wellbeing events across South West London.
- 2 Strengthen data collection and research**
Continue monitoring impact to evidence effectiveness for funder, identify areas for service improvement and identify impact and cost effectiveness and potential cost savings.
- 3 Further explore the impact of the events**
Research how events help participants manage their own health and wellbeing and are also preventative.
- 4 Strengthen multi-agency collaboration**
Maintain and expand partnerships to foster resource-sharing, holistic service delivery and wider research opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE FUTURE

- 5 Increase service capacity**
Secure dentistry and podiatry services and expand mental health provision, prioritising areas of high demand to reduce health inequalities.

- 6 Improve transport and accessibility**
Explore funding for minibus services and continue travel subsidies to help attendees reach events more easily.
- 7 Enhance outreach to marginalised groups**
Adapt communication strategies to increase participation from asylum seekers and other underrepresented communities.
- 8 Strengthen culturally specific support**
Expand support for diverse communities, such as Polish-speaking rehab options for addiction recovery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

- 9 Increase volunteer resources and support**
Provide adequate resources and support for volunteers with lived experience, ensuring they remain integral to service delivery.
- 10 Expand wellbeing activities**
Introduce additional sessions such as yoga, stretching, and art therapy to promote holistic health and emotional wellbeing.
- 11 Boost event promotion**
Use local media, translated materials and word-of-mouth campaigns and produce an annual calendar of events to maximise awareness and engagement.

Conclusion

The SPEAR Health and Wellbeing Days have demonstrated transformational impact in improving healthcare access and confidence among individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The initiative effectively combated health inequalities, supported engagement with primary healthcare, and fostered a supportive community environment. Future funding and research will further strengthen the program's ability to address complex health needs and reduce social isolation, ensuring that South West London's most vulnerable populations receive the care they deserve.

Researched and authored by
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SPEAR
homelessness to independence

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