**Population Health Case Studies**

**Hypertension: Barbers Pilot**

**What was the issue we were trying to resolve and why was it needed?**

The level of undiagnosed and untreated hypertension (high blood pressure) is exceptionally high, particularly in Blackpool. Finding people with unknown and therefore, untreated, high blood pressure is therefore important. Hypertension can cause serious health issues, such as heart attacks and strokes but unfortunately, high blood pressure is symptomless, which means there are lots of people within our population who have high blood pressure and are at high risk of these conditions, without knowing it. High blood pressure is identified through a blood pressure test. If raised, by monitoring your blood pressure, lifestyle changes can be implemented or treatment through blood pressure tablets can be administered to get it under control, lowering the risk of heart attack or stroke.

**Who was it aimed at?**

Men attending the barbers were targeted as this group are typically those who wouldn’t be thinking about their BP numbers or consider going to the GP unless they were ‘ill’. We were originally going to deliver the pilot in two different localities, based on the variation of the health inequalities they face. These were Lytham (Fylde & Wyre) and The Grange Estate (Blackpool). However, the barbers at The Grange unfortunately had to close due to staffing issues, meaning that only one area could be delivered.

**Summary of the project**

Local barbers were trained in cardiovascular disease (cvd), blood pressure testing, and making every contact count (mecc). Men were encouraged to test their blood pressure in the safe and comfortable environment of their barber’s shop, reducing the risk of ‘white coat syndrome’ (ie artificially raised blood pressure seen in clinical settings), and removing the need to attend a GP/Pharmacy when they didn’t feel unwell. Clients were informed how to record their BP and what the readings meant. They were also provided information about healthy eating, alcohol consumption and other relevant public health information by their barber. Most barber appointments were one-off appointments, so the client was alone with the barber, allowing confidentiality if required. However, the blood pressure monitoring machine was used by a large number of men while waiting for their appointment. If the result of the blood pressure check required further investigation, they were signposted to either the nearest pharmacy, their own GP or urgent care. This was based on the guidance provided to the barbers. Everyone who was tested was provided with a copy of their BP numbers from the test, even if they walked away with no further action required, due to being in the ‘healthy blood pressure’ range.

**Who was involved – partnership approach for example?**

* L&SC ICB – Population Health Team
* Jeannie Hayhurst – CVD Clinical Lead
* Blackpool Council Public Health Team
* Blue Skies Charity
* Blackpool Teaching Hospital Trust (BTHT) Personalised Care Team
* Theo Pettrocelli – Barber (self-employed/owner)
* Community Pharmacy colleagues (Mubasher Ali)

**When did it start/finish (is it ongoing)?**

The blood pressure monitoring began in the barber shop in April 2024 and monitoring data finished (officially) in October 2024. However, the machine was left with the barber shop and is still in place and the barber has continue to encourage blood pressure checks for visitors, which means that the majority of people attending the shop still have their blood pressure taken.

**What area was/is it delivered in?**

Theo’s barber shop is based in Lytham (North Lancs Place – Fylde & Wyre)

**How did the team go about delivering it?**

We worked as a collaborative team, planning in advance the outcomes we were hoping for, how we were going to evaluate it and what training and support Theo might need to deliver the programme.

The ICB provided a BP machine and the clinical training session. Blue Skies supported by designing and printing a tear-off ‘BP Results’ pad and purchasing the training session for a number of Blackpool community organisations to attend. Theo the barber was involved in this training. The community pharmacy team communicated with the local pharmacies that this initiative was taking place to support if required and the Blackpool Council collected the data and produced the report. The team met every two weeks to begin with and dropped this down to monthly as the project was embedded. It worked really well.

**What were the main outcomes/impacts for people?**

During the seven months, 182 people were tested (158 men, and 24 women) , with over 200 people now having blood pressure tests. The project identified people with high blood pressure readings that needed clinical intervention.

Of the 182, 31 (17%) people were advised to attend urgent care as their blood pressure warranted further assessment. Prior to this advice their readings were double-checked to ensure that we weren’t unnecessarily sending people to urgent care.

Of the 182, 7 (4%) people were found to have an irregular pulse upon testing. These were advised to attended their GP.

The age range of those tested varied between 20 and 91, but 9 of those with high readings, needing urgent care were between 29 and 39. This is under the age that the standard health check begins.

**Are there any comments/statements from people it helped?**

Two comments from feedback forms provide a feel for the positive reception this approach received:

* “I don’t like the doctors so being able to be checked at a place I am comfortable is ace.”
* “Absolutely great idea as I never go the doctors as I am too lazy and can’t get an appointment when it suits me”