

It's smiles all round at Preston's Health Mela

Preston
Primary Care Trust

NHS

Getting the best from your local NHS



SMILES BETTER: Preston PCT Chairman Wendy Hogg is welcomed by Ravi Shah and other Health Mela Committee members

IF you judge an event by smiles on faces, then Preston's Health Mela was certainly a resounding success.

Hundreds of people were attracted to the event, which is a unique partnership between community leaders and health professionals, aiming to encourage greater health awareness in minority ethnic communities.

The event, primarily sponsored by Preston Primary Care Trust, also serves as a showcase for Asian lifestyle and culture, with the consequent boost for health and community links.

As the PCT's chairman Wendy Hogg says: "It is the only event of its kind in the UK, and this popular local event is now in its fourth year. Preston PCT values the involvement which this gives us, and which makes people aware of the health initiatives we support as a primary care trust."

The main speaker at the successful event was Professor Raman Bedi, the Chief Dental Officer for England, who told organisers and guests: "The Health Mela is an example of good practice to health professionals across the UK. It's an example of how to work with community leaders to engage with ethnic minority groups who traditionally don't access NHS services because of fear or apprehension."

"I was delighted to open the event, which is a great way to encourage people from minority ethnic communities to meet health experts and get informal and friendly advice."

The event was held at Preston's Gujarat Hindu Society Community centre, where Wendy Hogg was shown round by Professor Romesh Gupta, Chairman of the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum.

It is seen as particularly important by the PCT, since the incidence of conditions such as diabetes, heart problems and strokes is high among ethnic communities. However, people from all walks of life attended the Health Mela, which served as a fun family day out, as well as a forum for good health and lifestyle information.



Prof Raman Bedi

The event included advice about diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, cancer services and workshops and seminars on reflexology, holistic living, aerobics, yoga and meditation. Free blood glucose and cholesterol testing was on offer too.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE VIEWS

A major review of mental health services throughout Lancashire is about to be undertaken and we would like your views.

The review will focus exclusively on mental health and social care services for adults of working and older age living in East, Central and West Lancashire and on the Fylde Coast, but not those services for people living in Lancaster.

The review's aim is to improve services by:

- Helping people with recovery from illness and/or the effects ill health has on their lives, through services which work to promote optimism and hope.
- Promoting positive mental health and tackling the causes of mental ill-health.
- Addressing the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental ill-health to ensure people have equal access to opportunities

More information from the initial consultation document will be available in libraries, Citizen Advice Bureaus, GP practices and health centres in April, or you can view the information at www.lancashirementalhealth.org.uk

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