



Birmingham LINK “Lives Interrupted” dementia event evaluation

Introduction

Birmingham Local Involvement Network (LINK) is an independent health and social care body that listens to the views and concerns of the citizens of Birmingham and raises issues on their behalf. It is entirely made up of volunteers in the community. The LINK also has a number of themed actions groups which look at specifically addressing the issues brought forward by the community.

One of its themed action group Older Persons Action Group (OPAG), decided to organise an event on dementia in partnership with the Alzheimer’s Society. Alzheimer’s Society is the leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers.

OPAG chose to organise this event due to lack of awareness of dementia and the support service available for people experiencing dementia or affected by it. The aim of the event was to highlight the importance of obtaining an early diagnosis and to encourage professionals and the public to learn from each other. *Lives Interrupted: recognising when memory problems become more than just losing your glasses* was held at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) in Cannon Hill on the 22nd of March 2011 from 10.00am to 3.00pm.

Pre event: planning

A planning committee was setup between the Birmingham LINK host staff, LINK members and staff from the Alzheimer’s Society. Several meetings were held from November 2010 to March 2011. We decided to choose MAC as the venue, because it is widely known in Birmingham and a lot of local events are held there. We also wanted to use a community venue in support of the local community. Another reason why this venue was chosen was because it is easily accessible by public transport and by car. There is also a lot of free parking and disable access. We wanted to make sure that we accommodated all members of the community.

It was decided that the event take place in two parts, a seminar to inform the audience about dementia and a drop in session for people to access a variety of information stalls.

Information stalls at the event

1. **Birmingham LINK** – We thought it will be useful for us to have a stand on the day to promote OPAG and for people to take away information about the LINK. Our stand also acted as a registration stand for people attending.
2. **Alzheimer's Society** – As partners in our event, it was useful for them to have a stand to promote their organisation and for people to take away information about dementia.
3. **Birmingham Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT)**- This trust provides mental health care to people living in Birmingham and Solihull who are experiencing mental health problems, it was particular important to have them there to inform the attendees about mental health issues, particularly dementia.
4. **Dementia Information and Support for Carers (DISC)**- This an organisation that provides information and support for people with dementia as well as their carers, we thought it would be useful to have an organisation who's main interest is providing support for dementia.
5. **Home Instead Senior Care** - Although this organisation does not specialise in dementia services, we thought it might useful to have an organisation that catered for the elderly. This organisation is an independent UK home care provider; they provide high quality care for older people in the comfort of their own home.
6. **NHS Public Health Department**- This organisation runs a public health promotion road-show at various community events and they can structure the contents of their stall to reflect the target audience and topic matter appropriately. We chose them to have an information stall at this event because they were able to structure their information to engage with people who had dementia or were affected by dementia.
7. **Working Age Dementia Service**- This service is part of BSMHFT, we thought it would be useful for them to have their own stall as they work with younger people with dementia, their families and carers across Birmingham. It was important that we did not just cater for people over 65, as dementia can affect people below this age group.

Advertising

A full A4 spread of the event was placed in the community magazine Update, this magazine is produced by the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC). The event was also advertised on our website, Facebook page and Twitter account. In addition to this, several post cards and posters were sent to various organisations, institutions and key professionals. They were sent to all Birmingham voluntary organisations, Birmingham councillors, GP surgeries, Primary Care Trusts pharmacies, Community Links service organisations, Birmingham City Council Neighbourhood offices, Aston Pride Organisations and all Birmingham MP's. Postcards were also sent to all LINK members. In addition to this, Birmingham LINK Community Outreach Officers also distributed the posters and postcards as part of their outreach work at community events and various care homes in Birmingham.

Mid Event: on the day

The event started with attendees registering at the LINK information stall, this was the first information stall they saw so it was an excellent opportunity to promote LINK. Each attendee was given an event pack which included the agenda of the day, our current newsletter and our latest annual report. A “goodie” bag of promotional materials of the LINK was also handed out to attendees, it was also an opportunity for them to have tea/coffee before the event began.

Norman Howell MBE, the chair of Birmingham LINK’s (OPAG), opened the event discussing his role as the chair of the group as well as sharing his experience of caring for his wife who was diagnosed with dementia. The next speaker was Dr Avi Dhariwal, a consultant for BSMHFT who discussed the various issues surrounding dementia and the current statistics of dementia prevalence within the UK.

We had a break mid event to offer the attendees an opportunity to have access information stalls; lunch was also offered at this time. We originally planned to have a “*singing for the brain session*” along with break but due to time constraints we had to remove this from the list of items planned for the day.

The second part of the event involved the attendees going back to the seminar room to listen to the last two presentations. Robin Felton the Team Manager of Birmingham Memory Assessment Service (BMASS), informed the audience on how they can access the BMASS service, how people are referred and highlighted the importance of obtaining an early diagnosis. The second presentation was by the Alzheimer’s Society. This was delivered by Jo Min the Support Services Manager and Wendy Harkness the Information Officer, both employees of Alzheimer’s Society. They gave a brief presentation on their organisation and discussed how people could get involved.

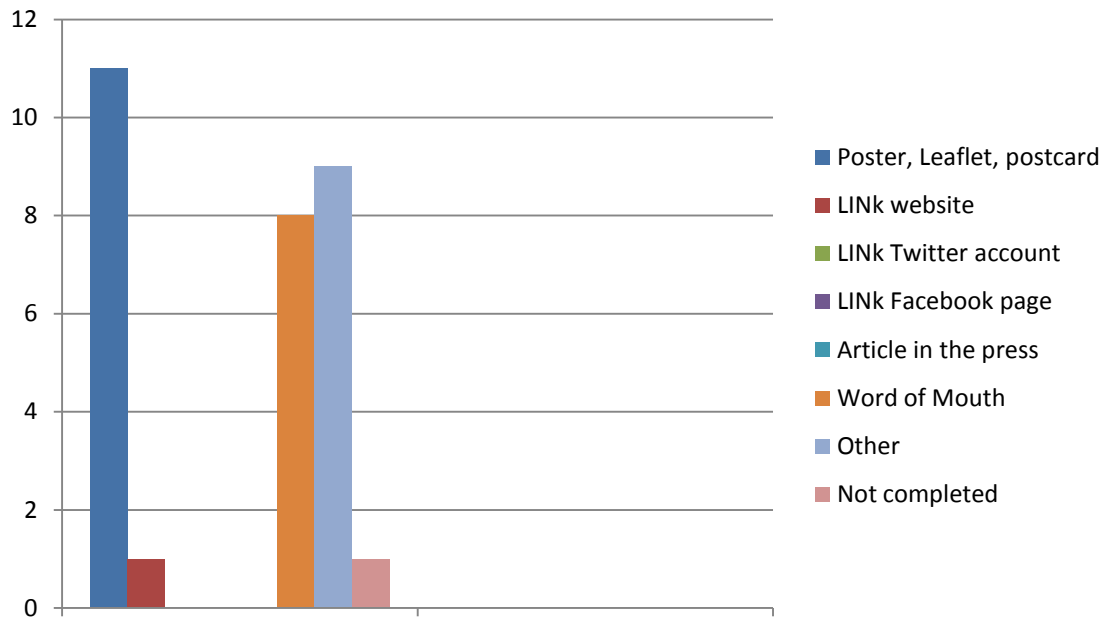
To close the event a speech was given by John Goodfellow a volunteer for Alzheimer’s Society, he also chaired the event. Attendees were then given a further opportunity to have a look at the information stalls.

Lastly, the event evaluation questionnaires were handed out for people to complete.

Post event: findings

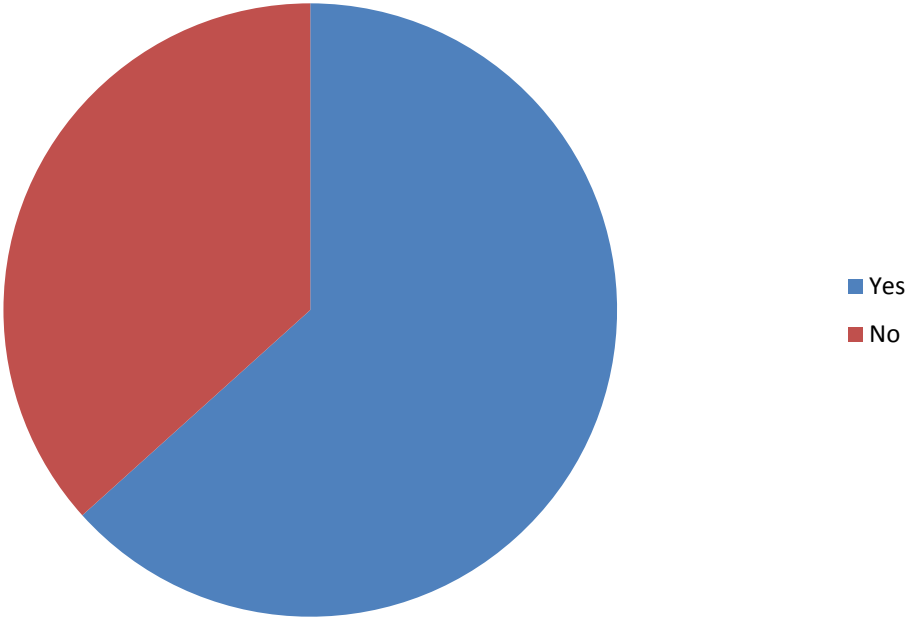
A series of questions were devised by the Community Outreach Officers and Marketing and Communication Officer of Birmingham LINK to gather findings from the attendees of the event. Please see below for the results of Birmingham LINK event evaluation questions:

1. How did you hear about this event?



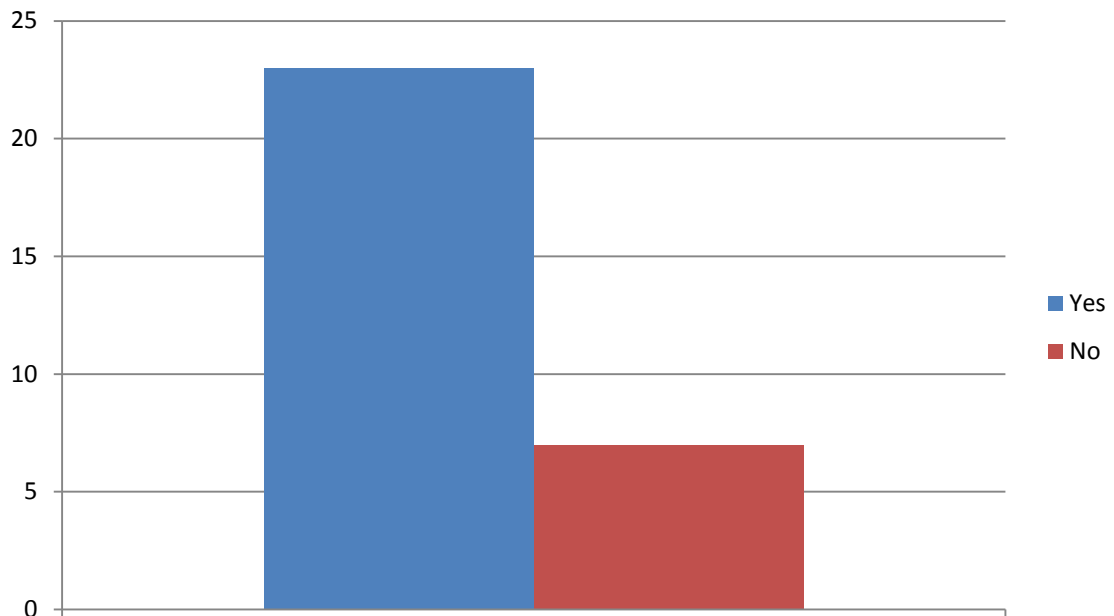
As the above figure illustrates the majority of people who attended the event heard about it through our postcard, poster and leaflet campaign. This proves that our campaign was successful. However, it is important to note that “word of mouth” is almost as high as our promotional campaign; perhaps the attendees who received our promotional material also informed their family, friends and their community.

2. Did you know about Birmingham LINK before this event?



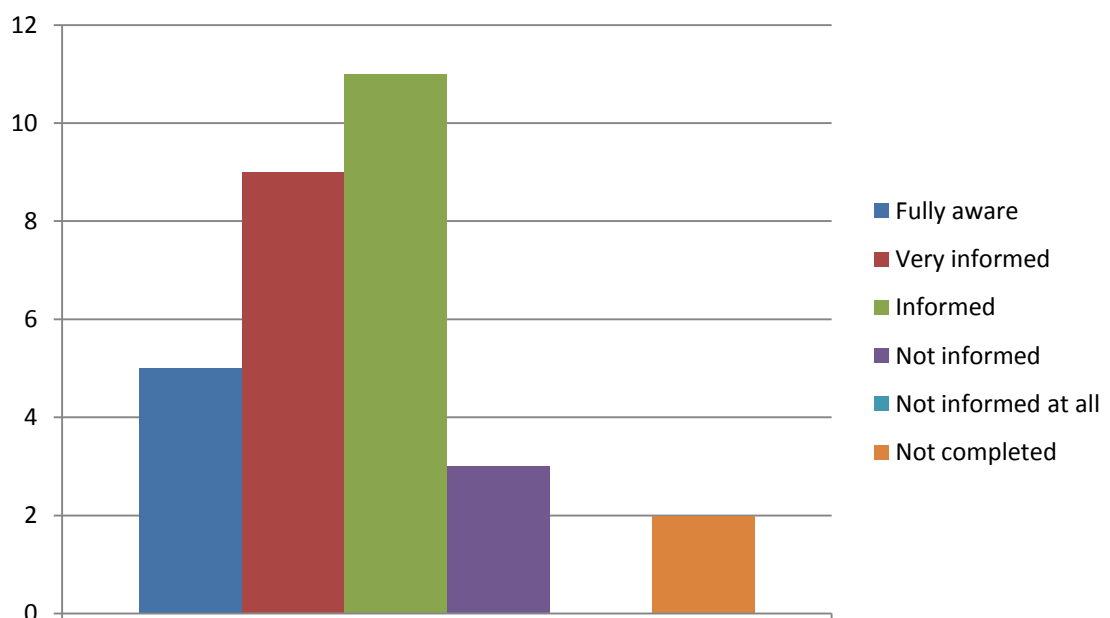
19 out of 30 who completed the survey new about Birmingham LINK before the event as the above pie chart illustrates. This is very positive to note for our marketing and public relations campaign.

3. Do you know more about Birmingham LINK from attending this event?



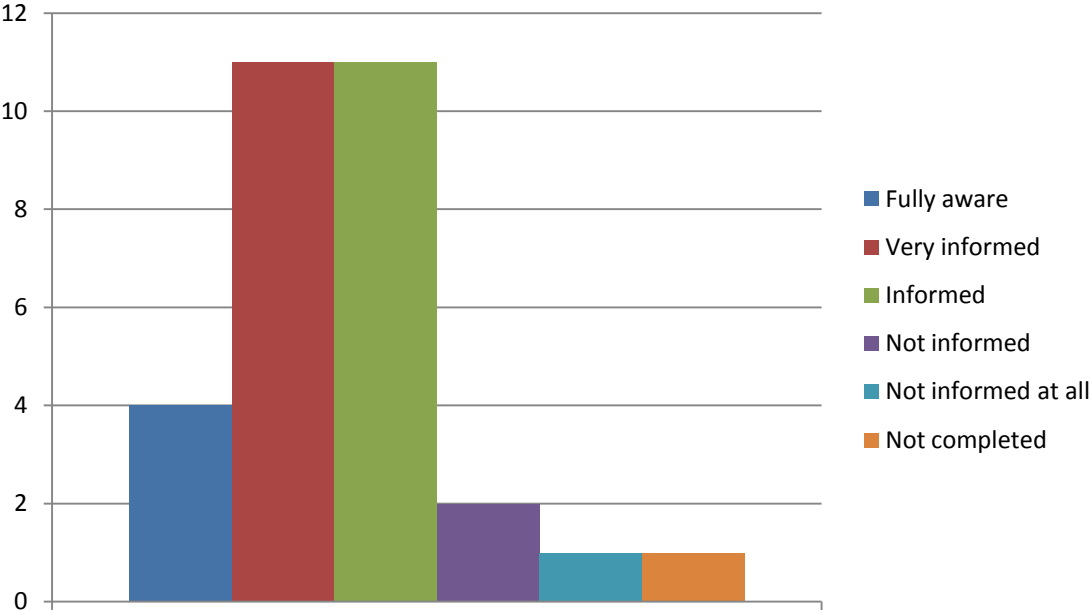
The above graph shows that LINK had a strong presence on the day and the attendees were more informed about LINK from attending this event.

4. How informed are you about the topic of this event?



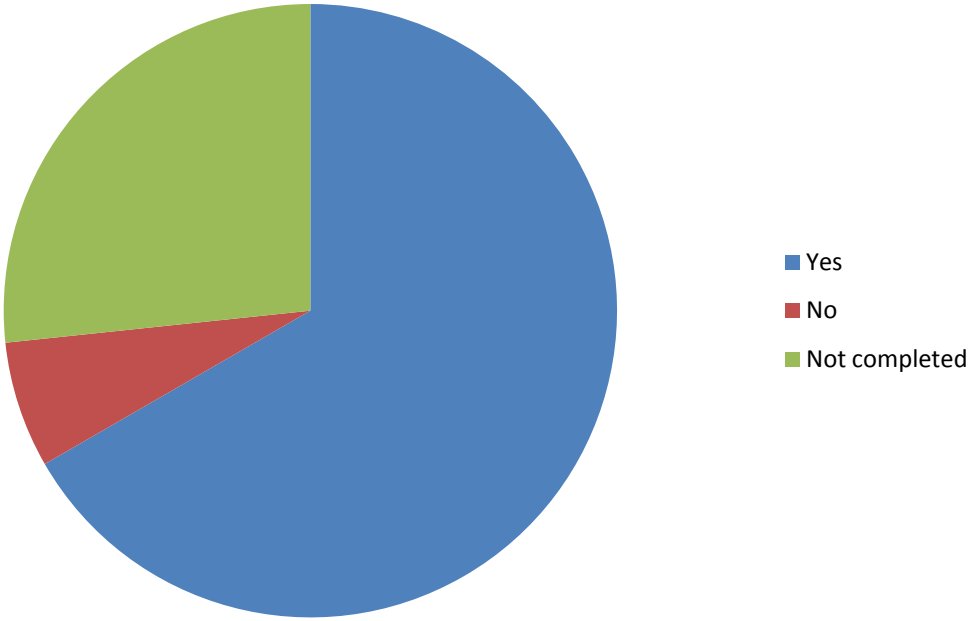
The figure above shows that people were very informed about the topic of the event. However, it would have been useful to note how informed people were of dementia prior to the event and how informed they were after the event.

5. How informed are you about the support services available at this event?



The above figure shows that people were aware of the support services at the event, this suggests that the event achieved its objective of informing people of the support services for dementia in Birmingham. However, 7% stated that they were not informed of the support services at this event. It would have been useful to ask why.

6. If you attended this event to access guidance and support, have you been able to the information you need?



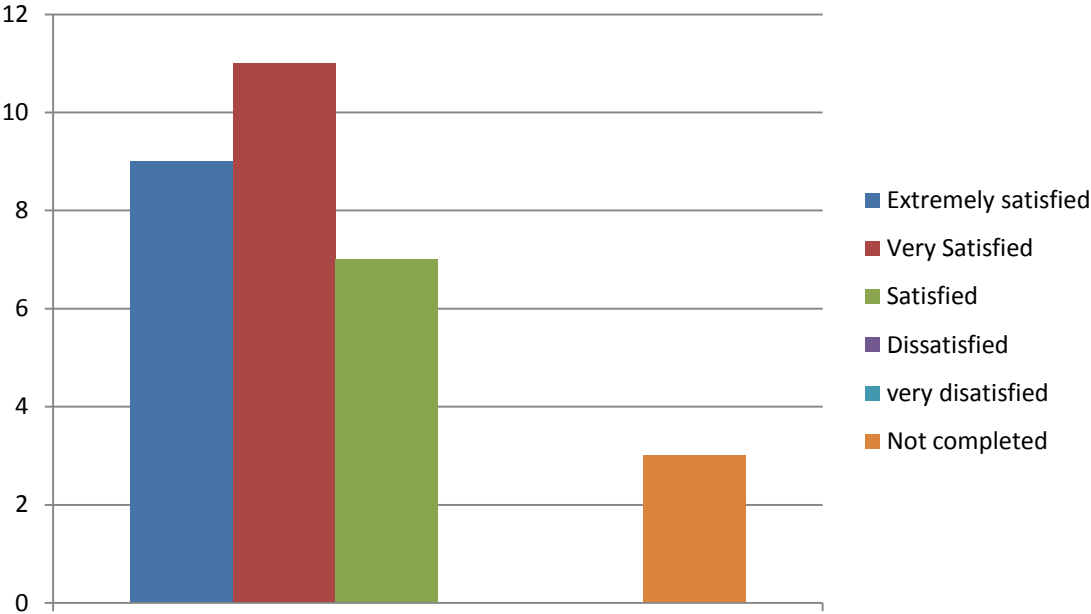
An overwhelming percentage of people felt that they have been able to access guidance and support as the above pie chart illustrates. These are some of the comments from the attendees:

“I enjoyed the presentation of the man who had Alzheimer’s / dementia. He was better than the doctor explaining in simple English the way Alzheimer’s / dementia affects his life”

“I have got information from various stalls”

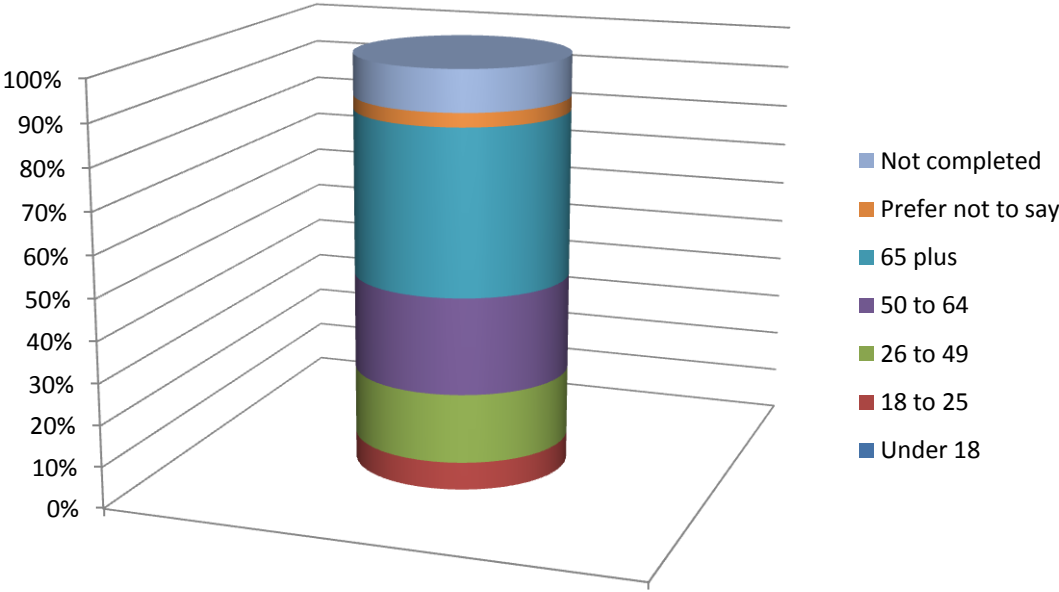
“Yes lots. It will help us to help members of our pensioners club”

7. How satisfied are you with the organisation of the event?



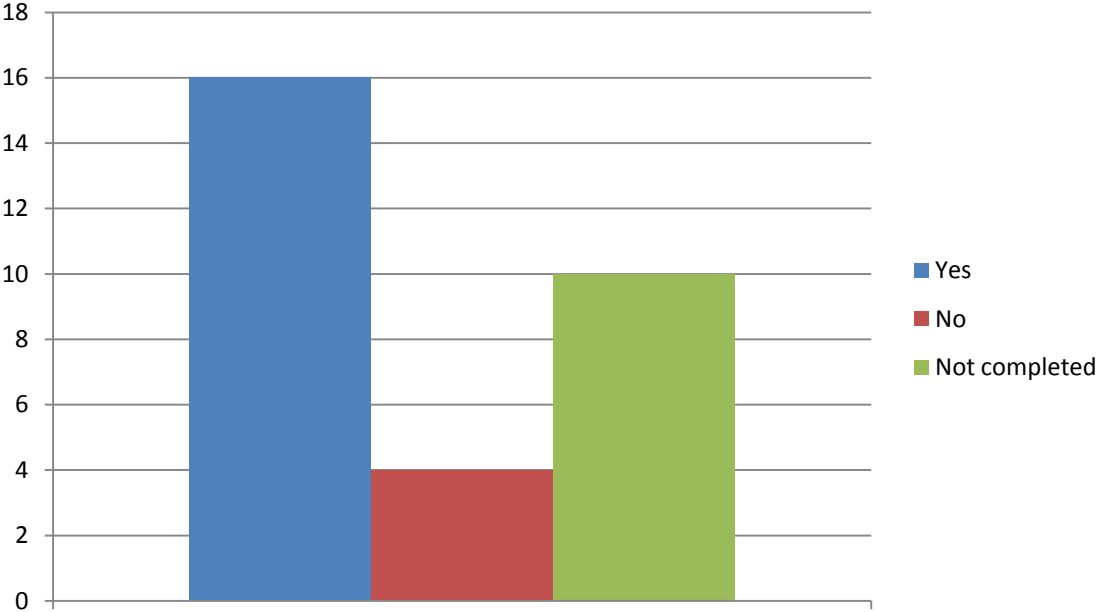
Its positive to note from the above graph that everyone who completed the survey was either extremely satisfied to satisfied, with the organisation of the event. However, it is what mentioning that the event did go over schedule due to a speaker running over the time allocated to them.

8. What is your age group?



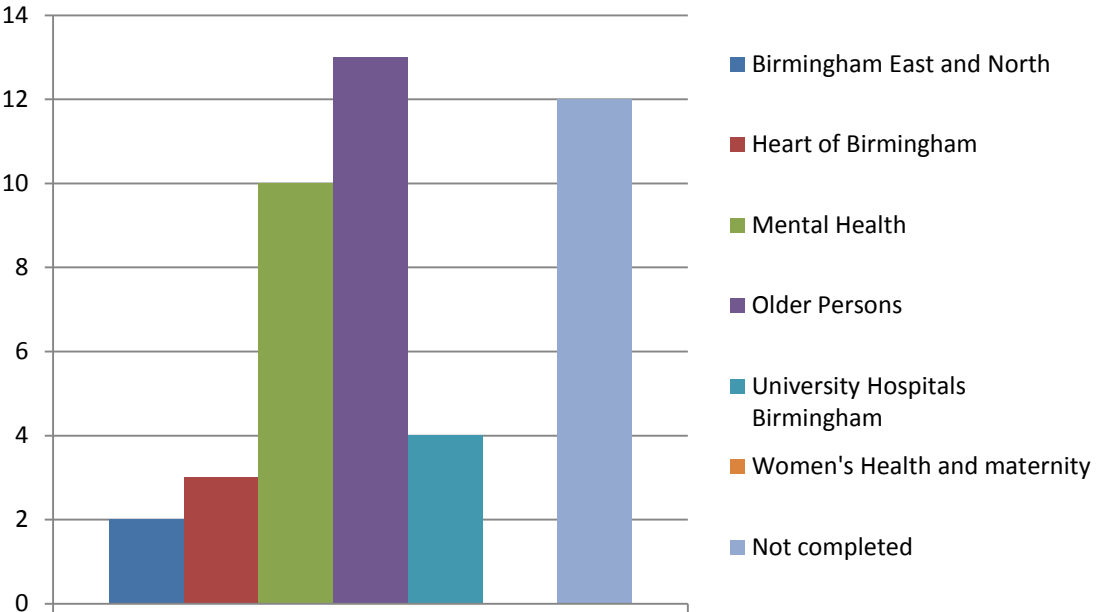
The highest number of people who attended this event was from the age group 65 plus, as the above figure shows. This was a positive outcome; we particularly wanted to target this age group. The second highest age group was in the 50 years to 64 years age bracket which was our second target audience, as this age group is more likely to experience working age dementia. Overall we had a variety of age groups who attended this event apart from the under 18's.

9. Would you consider joining a Birmingham LINK Action group?



Over half of the people who completed the survey stated they would be interested in joining an action group. However, 13% stated that they would not be interested in joining one; it might have been useful to know why.

10. If you answered yes to the previous question, which group/groups would you like to join?



The above graphs shows a list of current working groups within Birmingham LINK, it interesting to note the Older Persons action group is the highest on the list of action groups that the attendees would like to join. This was a very positive outcome as we wanted to promote this group and encourage membership.

Conclusion

The event achieved its main objective of raising awareness of dementia, the support services available and stressing the importance of obtaining an early diagnosis. 87% of people who attended stated that they were informed about support services for dementia at the event. 67% were also able to get the information they needed if they attended the event for this reason. In addition to this, there was a good balance of professionals and members of public in attendance. The format of having a seminar as well as information stalls worked quite well, attendees were able to learn more about dementia and during the break access support services from the information stalls.

The number of attendees was also impressive with over 100 people attending. There was a wide variety of professionals in attendance from various backgrounds such as NHS primary care trusts, charities and third sector organisations. The attendees from members of the public were equally as varied, they came from a variety of local communities in Birmingham and from different ethnic backgrounds.

The venue was also suitable; however, it is worth mentioning some of the elderly attendees had problems accessing the stairs in seminar room as they were a bit high.

It was also a positive result to team up with the Alzheimer's Society as they are one of the leading organisations in UK that support people with dementia. They were able to provide us with the much needed background information about dementia as well as provide key speakers for the event. It was also an excellent opportunity for them to promote their services as well as their organisation as a whole.

Overall the event was a success, benefiting all parties involved. The professionals were able to inform the public about their services, the public were able to get more information about dementia. Professionals and members of the public were also able to learn from each other. Lastly, it was an excellent opportunity to promote Birmingham LINK and in particular OPAG, we had 30 people sign up to join Birmingham LINK. It would definitely be beneficial for all if we had a similar event in the future.

Recommendation

- It would have been more appropriate to select a venue with a flat surface and better disable access.
- The time allocated for the event was not adequate, perhaps extending it to a full day event rather than a half day.
- It might have been useful if the questionnaire devised for this event asked the attendees about information of dementia and support services prior to the event and after the event. This would have enabled the results to show how much better informed people were before and after attending the event.



Lives Interrupted Event
Tuesday 22nd March 2010 (10.00am – 1.00pm)
Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH

PROGRAMME

Chair- John Goodfellow, volunteer for the Alzheimer's Society

10.00am	Registration
10.30am	<u>Chairman of the Older Persons Action Group Opening Speech</u> by Norman Howell MBE Birmingham LINK
10.35am	<u>Dementia Updated</u> by Dr Avi Dhariwal Consultant Old Age Psychiatrist and Lead Clinician, Little Bromwich Centre Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust
11.00am	<u>Carers Experience: Difficulty in getting an early diagnosis</u> by Norman Howell MBE Birmingham LINK
11.10am	<u>Service User Experience</u> by Berni Blackledge Services Support Manager-Peer Support for the Alzheimer's Society and by Terry Wilder, a service user
11.25am	<u>Break and Singing for the Brain Session</u> by John Goodfellow, volunteer for Alzheimer's Society (Also an opportunity to visit the stands)
12.00pm	<u>Birmingham Memory Assessment and Advisory Service (BMASS)</u> by Robin Felton Team Leader of BMASS
12.20pm	<u>Role of the Alzheimer's Society</u> by Jo Min, Services Support Manager Information and Education and Wendy Harkness, Information Support Officer and AT Lead for the Alzheimer's Society
12.30pm	Closing speech and further opportunity to look at the stands
13.00pm	Close

Event Evaluation Form

1. How did you hear about this event?

- a. Poster, leaflet, postcard
- b. LINK's website
- c. LINK's Twitter account
- d. LINK's Facebook page
- e. Article in the press
- f. Word of mouth
- g. Other (please specify)

2. Did you know about Birmingham LINK before this event?

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. Do you know more about Birmingham LINK now that you came to this event?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. How informed are you about the topic of this event?

- a. Fully aware
- b. Very informed
- c. Informed
- d. Not informed
- e. Not informed at all

5. How informed are you about the support services available at this event?

- a. Fully aware
- b. Very informed
- c. Informed
- d. Not informed
- e. Not informed at all

6. If you attended this event to access guidance and support, have you been able to get the information you need?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comments:

7. How satisfied are you with the organisation of the event?

- a. Extremely satisfied
- b. Very satisfied
- c. Satisfied
- d. Dissatisfied
- e. Very dissatisfied

Comments:

8. What is your age group?

- a. Under 18
- b. 18 to 25
- c. 26 to 49
- d. 50 to 64
- e. 65 plus
- f. Prefer not to say

Join the action!

Birmingham LINK Action Groups are formed by individuals who are passionate about health and adult social care. Their work is based around a work plan setting priorities related to their areas of expertise. The level of involvement depends entirely on each individual but Action Groups tend to meet on a regular basis, usually no more than once a month.

9. Would you consider joining a Birmingham LINK Action Group?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. If you answered yes to the previous question, which group/groups would you like to join?

- a. Birmingham East and North
- b. Heart of Birmingham
- c. Mental Health
- d. Older Persons
- e. University Hospitals Birmingham
- f. Women's Health and Maternity