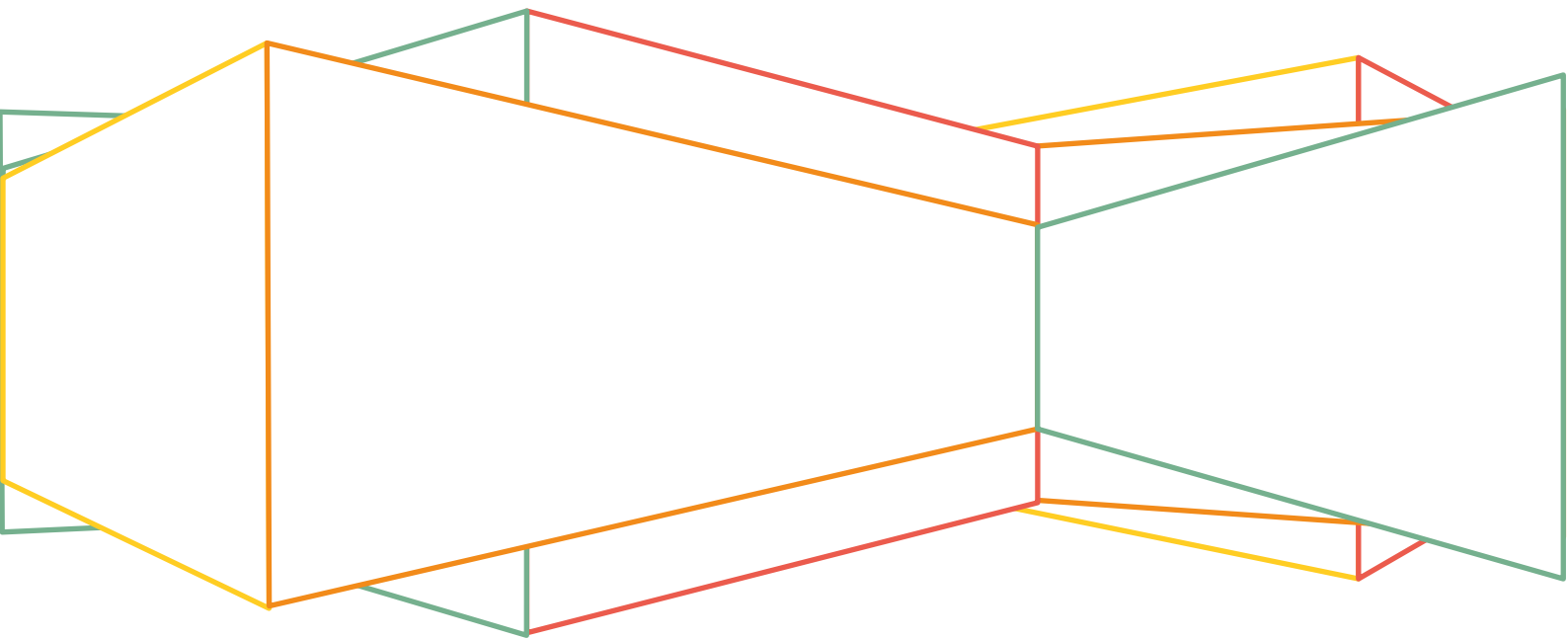




# Your Voice, Your Health

A consultation with BAMER Women

Megan Ohri





## Introduction

The Health Team at Zest work closely with Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) women in the community, engaging them in wellbeing courses; health activities; social groups and English conversation classes as well as providing one-to-one healthy lifestyle support. Through this work they had been made aware of a number of issues in relation to how and why the women access GPs and other health services. Anecdotally the team had heard that the women had struggled with issues relating to language and translation services; had little knowledge of their rights to request specific GPs or to change GPs; often went to the GP when an alternative service might have been more appropriate (e.g. calling 101, using a pharmacist). To find out more about the community's experiences and expectations of GPs we held two consultation events at Zest.

## The Consultation

The consultations took place on Tuesday 22nd May and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Unfortunately, we were unable to find suitable dates which were not during Ramadan, however, this did not impact on attendance and we were able to deliver the sessions. It was important for the session times not to interfere with prayer times so they ran from 11:30 until 13:30. The sessions were advertised via the health team and in particular promoted via our BME outreach worker who is in touch with local women on a regular basis. Appendix 1 is a copy of the flier used to promote the consultation.

## Who we consulted with

39 women attended the first session and there were 22 at the second session. The women were aged between 24 and 70+. The majority of women in attendance were Yemini. There were also women from Morocco, Indonesia, Libya, Iraq, Syria and Britain.

Each session was different so many of the same women attended both sessions. There was an Arabic interpreter present at each event and bilingual volunteers had been asked to spread themselves out into each small group to aid the small group discussions. A number of members of the Zest for Health team were also present and they introduced the event and consultation questions and facilitated small group discussions. Both events were attended by Sarah Smizz, who recorded the events using pictures and graphics creating a visual record of what the women said as they said it.



## Consultation Event 1:

The key consultation questions agreed for the first event were:

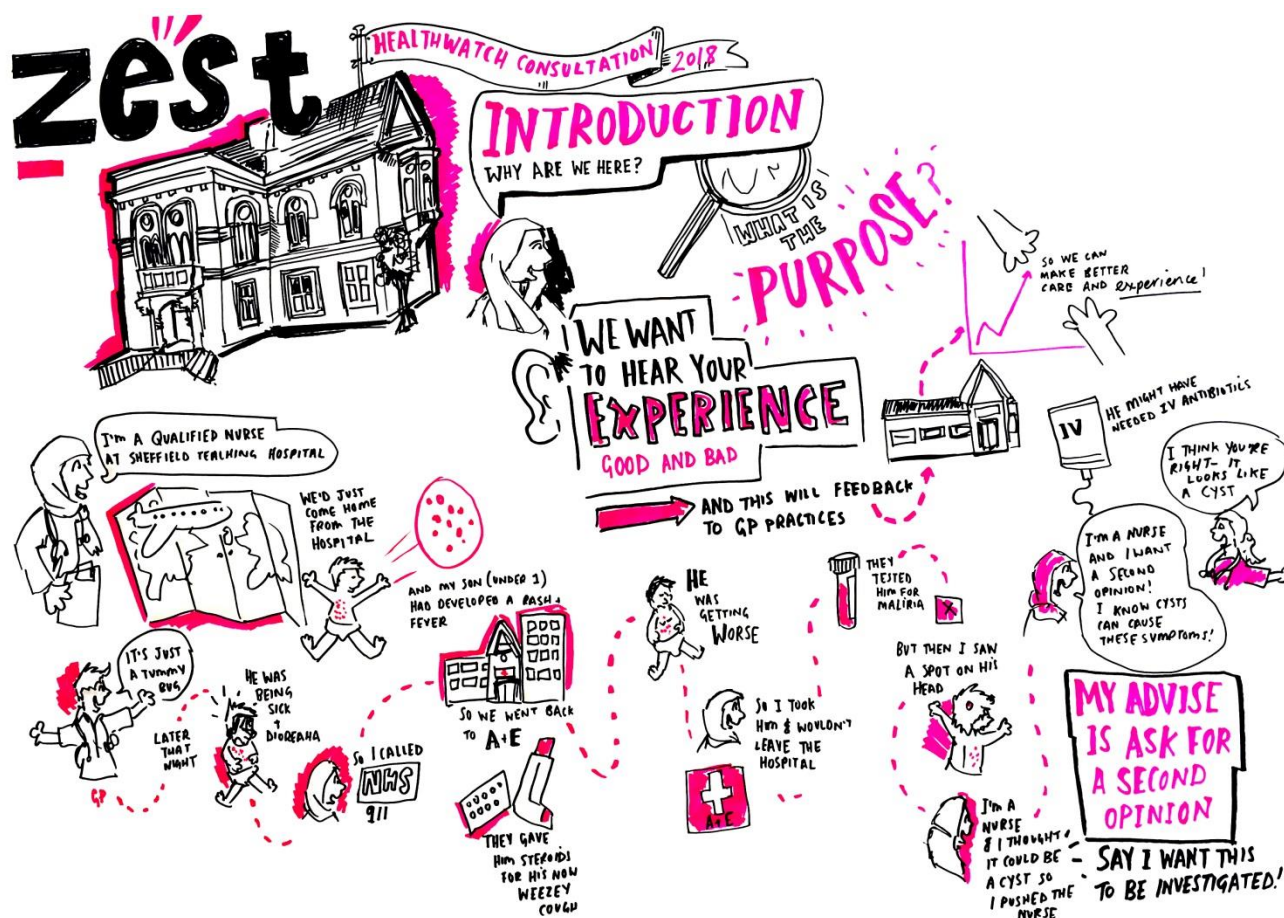
- What were the barriers to accessing health services that the women were facing?
- What worked well for them in accessing health services?



Samira, the Zest BME health worker gave an introduction and explained the purpose of the event and who we were.

3 women (who had been briefed in advance) told stories of the experience in accessing health services, some were negative and some positive. By arranging in advance for some of the women to speak about their experiences this gave the other women a permission to speak openly to us about their personal experiences and helped to break the ice.

The graphics below show the 3 women's stories:



# #SpeakUp



Once the women had listened to the stories they were split into small groups to discuss the consultation questions -each group had a volunteer interpreter and a member of the Zest staff team.

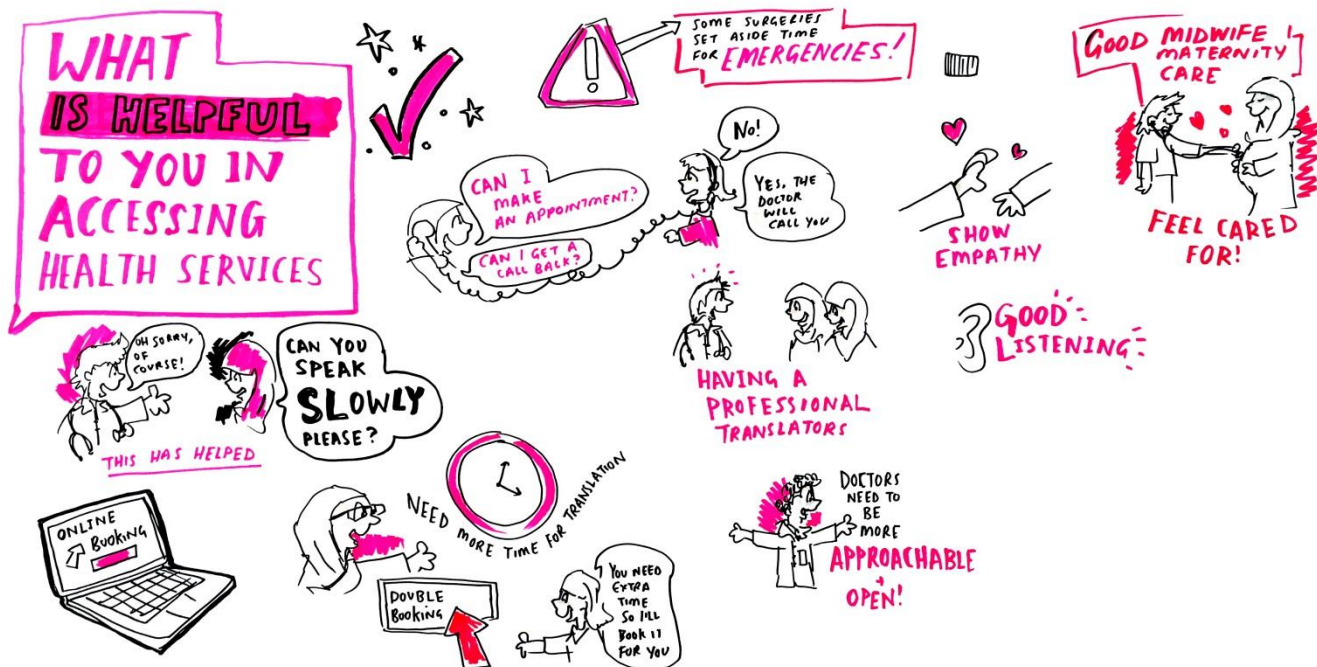
The graphic below contains the feedback to first question on barriers:







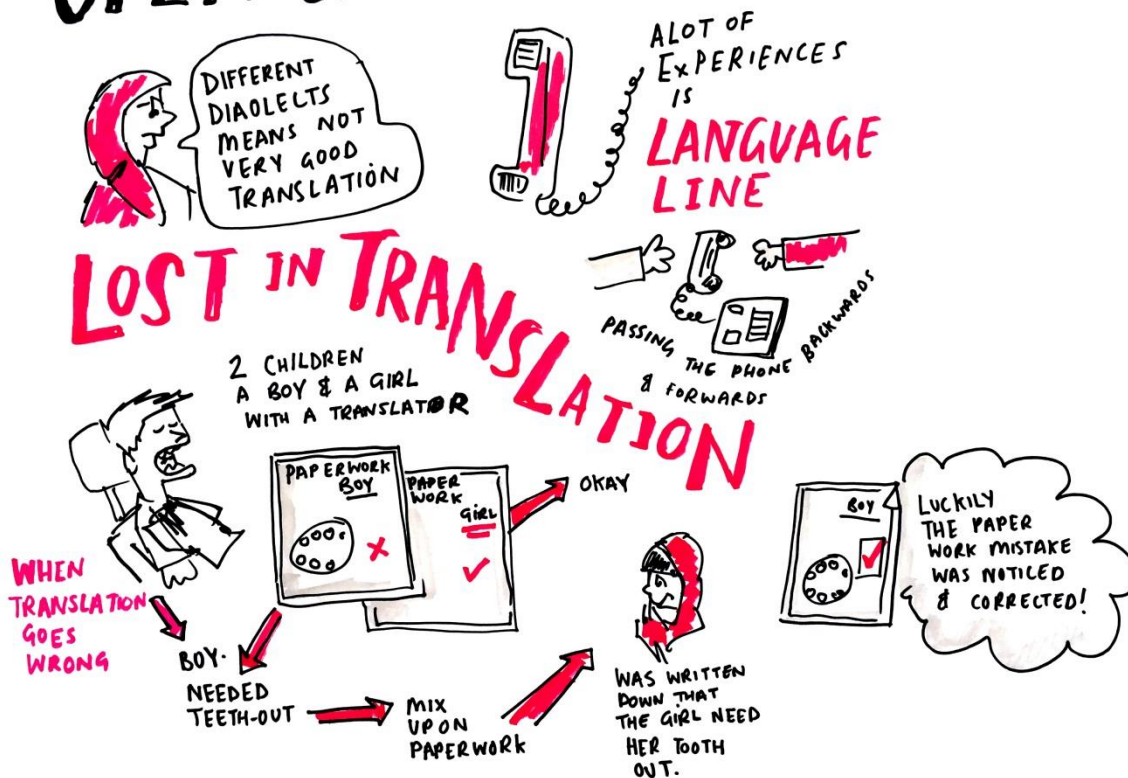
Feedback from the second question on enablers:





Finally there was some general discussion about some specific issues which had arisen:

## OPEN QUESTIONS



### Consultation Event 2:

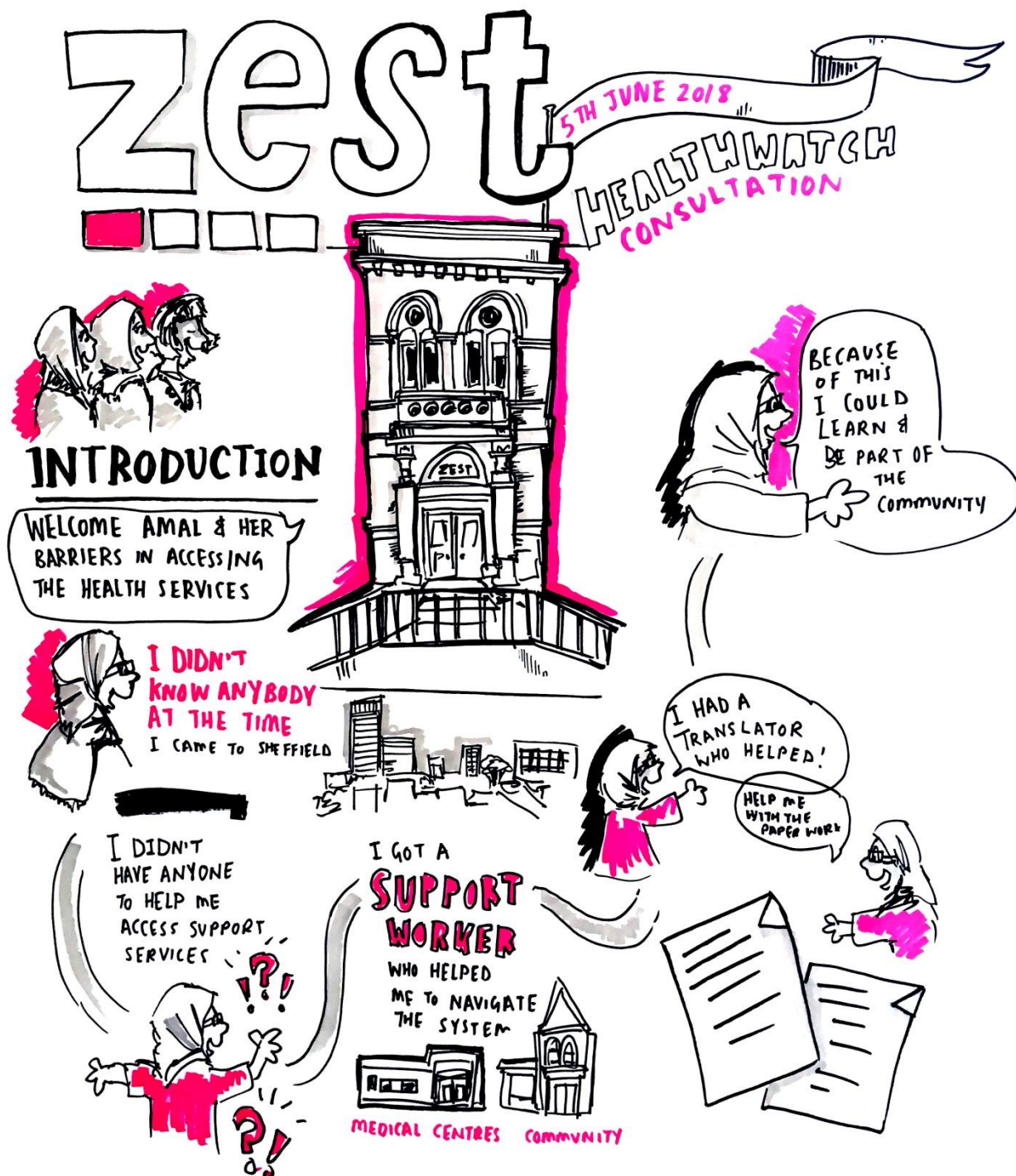
The consultations questions for the second event focused around how people accessed services and what we could do to improve access. This was a freer conversation and the questions acted more as a prompt for the conversation.

The questions were:

- Which Person or Organisation would you go to FIRST for advice when you, or a family member, are not well? Where would you go for information or advice about Healthy Lifestyles?
- What is the best way for Doctors and other Health Professionals to communicate with you about your health? (Test results, Hospital and GP appointments etc).
- What ways would you like to receive Information about Health and other Services offered at Zest?
- How confident are you to look after you own health? What sort of things do you do to keep healthy? What would make you more confident to take responsibility for your own health? How could Zest or other Community Hubs help you with this?



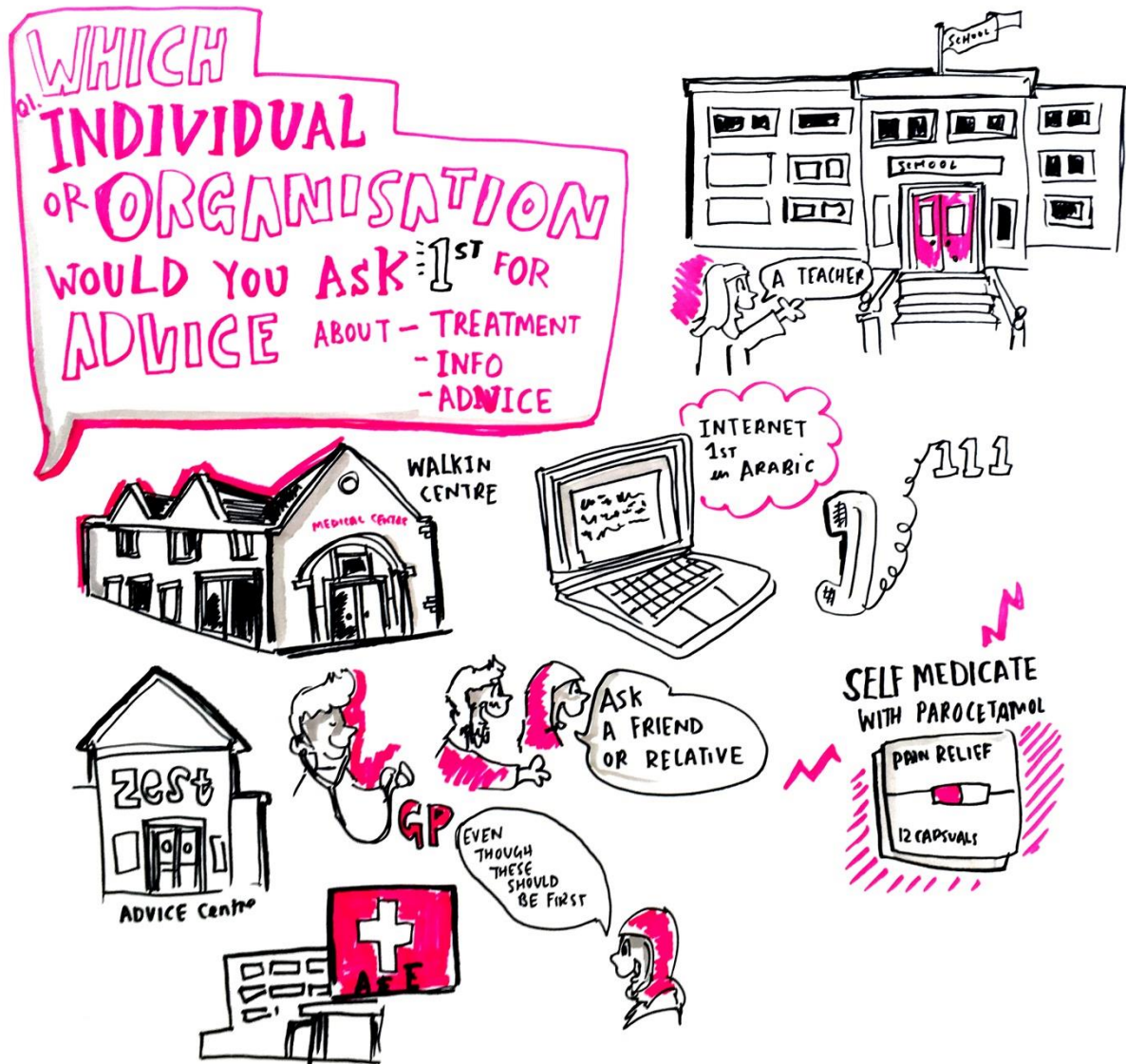
As with the first event we started with one woman sharing her story of when she first arrived in the UK and how she found out about health services that were available to her.







Again we split the group into small groups to allow everyone the opportunity to speak. Each small group had a volunteer interpreter and a member of the Zest health team. Feedback from the first set of questions about where to go for health related advice and information.





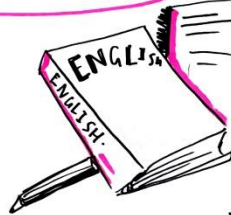
Q1.B) WHERE WOULD YOU  
GO FOR INFORMATION  
OR ADVICE ABOUT  
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



LOCAL SCHOOLS  
+  
TEACHERS.



HEALTH  
WORKER



YOU  
CAN  
GO  
HERE

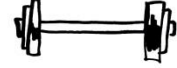
MY ENGLISH  
TEACHER GAVE  
ME LOTS OF  
ADVICE!



SLIMMING  
WORLD +  
WEIGHT-WATCHES



zest

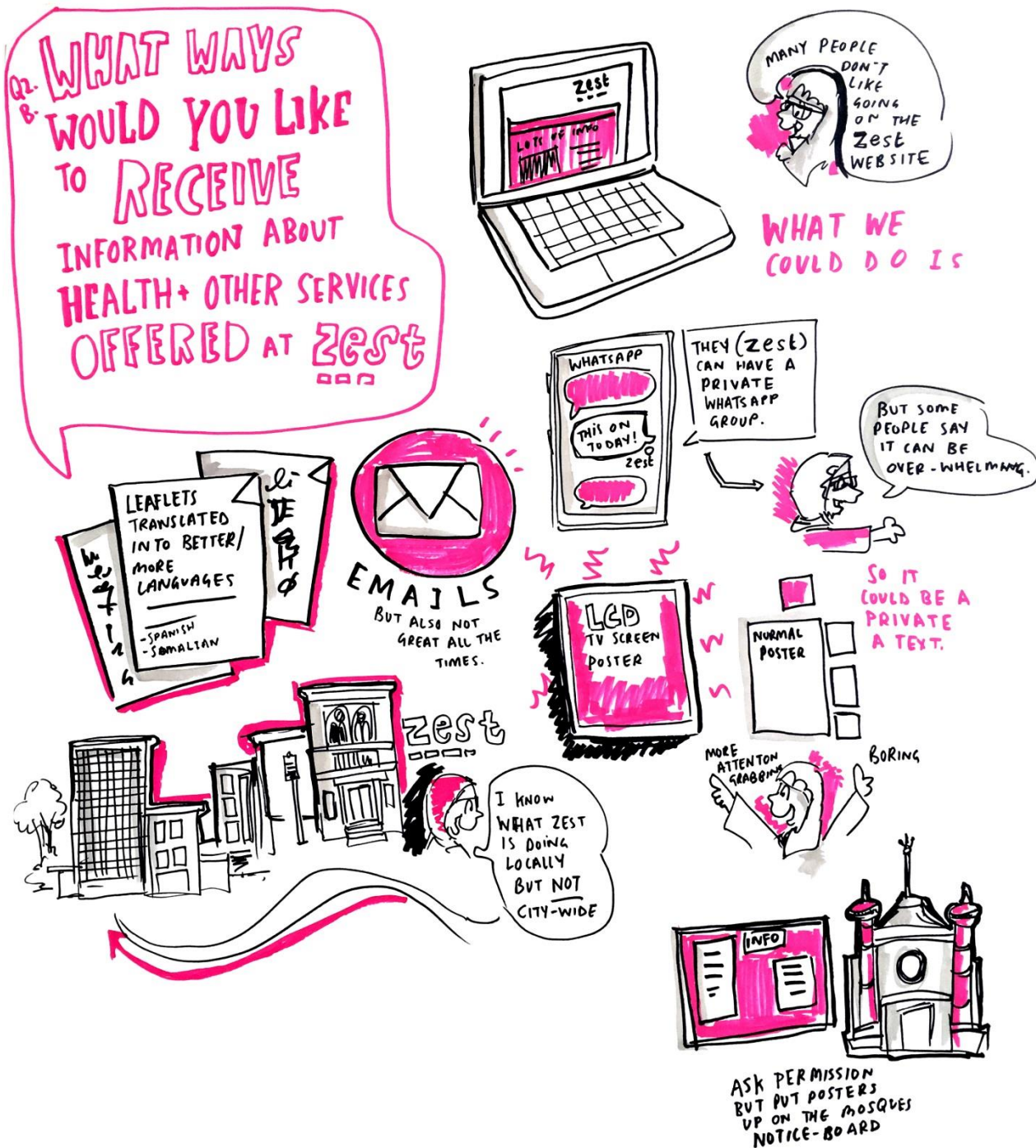


THE GYM  
+ OTHER  
SPORTS  
CENTRES

The next set of questions were about communication methods as this had come up repeatedly in the first consultation.



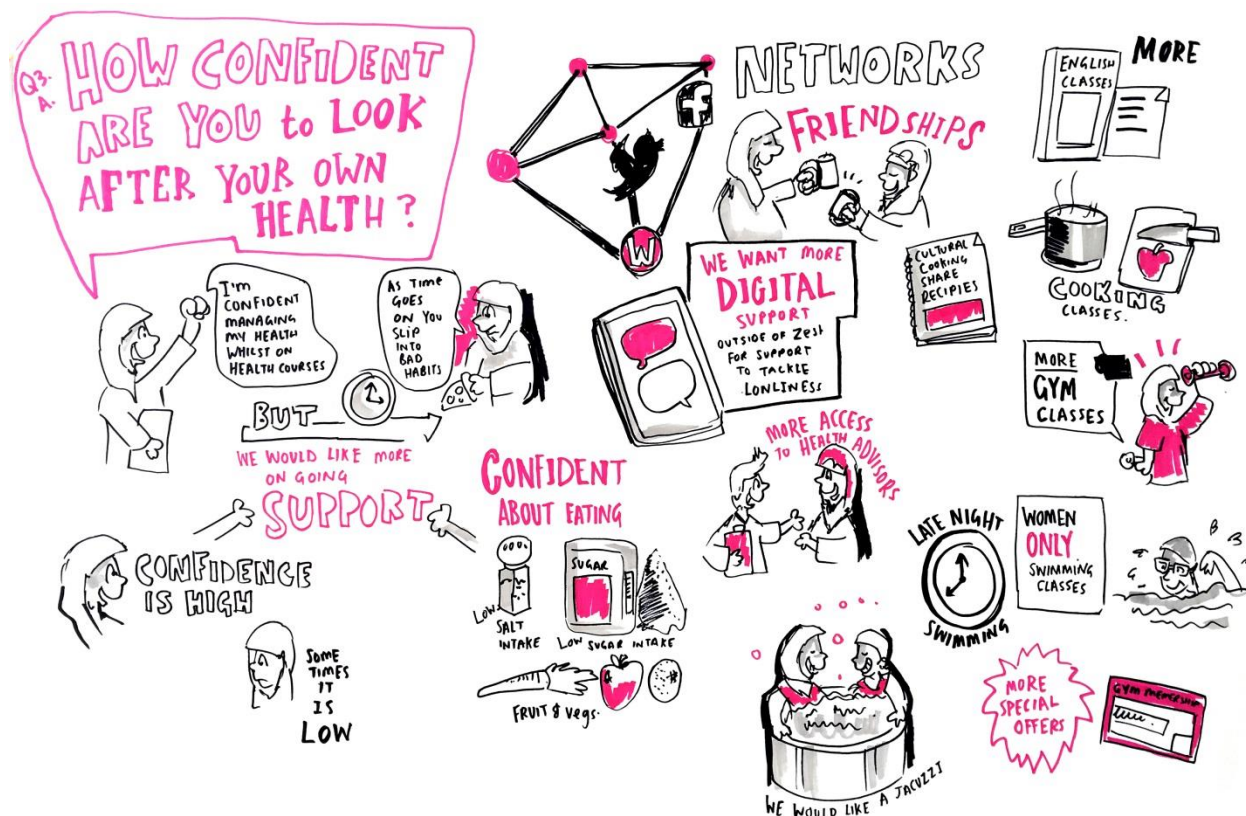
We also asked how we could improve our communication processes at Zest







Finally we wanted to understand how confident the women were at looking after their own health



## Recommendations

The focus of our recommendations are about the barriers that women in our communities face accessing services.

### Communication

- Healthcare professionals need to enable people for whom English is not their first language enough time to explain their symptoms and professionals should speak slowly so that they can be understood more easily.
- Offer double appointments to people who need to bring an interpreter with them.
- Use text messages to communicate with people who do not have much English instead of lengthy letters or phone calls.
- Offer the opportunity to discuss clinical information face-to-face to ensure that the person understands.
- If using language line for interpretation check that the interpreter speaks the same dialect and the patient can understand them.
- Provide written leaflets/information in community languages where possible.



### **Appointments**

- If not already doing so, set aside some appointments for urgent cases/emergencies to enable people to see a doctor quickly.
- Ensure patients know they have a choice of GP practice and can request a female doctor.
- Enable women to see a female doctor whenever this is requested.

### **What next?**

We will:

- Share the findings of this consultation and our recommendations with the central GP neighbourhood group and continue to work with them to improve community access to health services.
- Work on our own communication methods to ensure we communicate in a range of ways which are accessible to all
- Arrange workshops in the community such as 'know your rights' and 'family health'. These courses will be delivered in community languages and help to improve people's health literacy.
- Feedback to the participants about any progress which is made to improve their access to health services following this consultation.
- Continue to request and seek out health promotion information in community languages.



### **About Healthwatch Sheffield**

Healthwatch Sheffield is the city's local consumer watchdog for health and social care services. The organisation exists to help adults, children and young people to influence and improve the way health and social care services are designed and run in the city. Healthwatch Sheffield is completely independent from the NHS and Sheffield City Council.

### **About the #SpeakUp grants**

In 2017/18 Healthwatch Sheffield ran a small grants programme called 'Speak Up'. The programme was designed to enable local organisations and community groups to gather views and experiences of health and social care services from Sheffield residents, especially from those who do not traditionally have a voice. The aim is to ensure that health and social care decision makers in the city hear from a diverse range of people about their experiences of services.



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[www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk)**



## Appendices



## Appendix 1: Event Flyer

# **zest**

 FOR THE COMMUNITY

**Tell us about your experiences of health services in Sheffield.**

**Women only events 11:30am until  
1:30pm**

**Tuesday 22nd May and  
Tuesday 5th June  
Zest for Sports (Main Hall)**

# **Your Voice, Your Health**

**healthwatch**  
Sheffield



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