

Westmorland and Furness innovation project

NHS 10-year plan shift: hospital to community

Problem

Westmorland and Furness faced a shortage of local Shared Lives carers, following a local government restructuring in 2023 that saw the division of the Shared Lives Cumbria service between Westmorland and Furness, and Cumberland, resulting in significantly more than half of the carers no longer being available.

Innovation

Westmorland and Furness invested their ARF grant entirely into a creative recruitment campaign, looking at a range of new methods to increase their number of local Shared Lives carers. They did this by working closely with the internal council communications team, a collaboration that had not been common practice before this project.

"This has felt very different, as it has been more joint working, with both teams using their areas of expertise."

Philippa Fox, Manager Shared Lives, Westmorland and Furness Council

Project overview

Using Acorn demographic profiling provided the local authority with nuanced insight on their target audiences (where they do their weekly food shop and what they watch on TV, etc.), based on those currently enlisted. This helped to shape messaging, define target areas for leaflet drops, and provide best locations for in-person recruitment stands. Other recruitment campaign methods have included radio and Facebook adverts, sponsoring the local rugby team and attending community events, such as open days at SEN colleges.



Emerging learnings and insights

- Joint working across local authority teams contributes to project success.
- Demographic audience insights enable precise and cost-effective targeting.

Emerging impact

By timing leaflet drops with boosted Facebook and radio adverts, Westmorland and Furness went from an average of none or one enquiry a month before the project began, to 60 new enquiries in September 2024.

At the start of the programme they had 23 carers enrolled, and in the next three months this is expected to increase to 42. They are projecting that by the end of 25/26, they will have 50 carers enlisted.

"As a result of the ARF, we've had a few people that we have now been able to accommodate that we couldn't help before... We've been able to respond to a couple of potential breakdowns at home, identifying respite care to avoid traditional care systems."

Philippa Fox, Manager Shared Lives, Westmorland and Furness Council

