

VANGUARD: Better Care Together

Case study: Millom Community Involvement



Purpose:

Millom, located in South West Cumbria, has a population of just 8,500 but generates over 22,900 journeys to Furness General Hospital each year. Millom is a 50 minute drive from the nearest A&E department and these journeys equate to over 1,000,000 miles travelled per year.

In April 2014, following GP retirement and recruitment difficulties, the General Practice in Millom gave notice that it could no longer cover the community hospital and the hospital closed temporarily. The community felt this was the final straw as services have over time been reduced in the town. Within a week a community group was formed who organised a protest march through the town with over 2000 people.

As a result, Better Care Together have embarked on a **community engagement journey** with Millom to improve healthcare services locally **resulting in fewer hospital admissions, fewer A&E and out-patient attendances and fewer patients having to travel for care.**

Community involvement has enabled the local population to take responsibility for their own healthcare whilst supporting the improvement of services locally.

How it works:

The community is an equal partner in the Millom Alliance. The Millom Alliance formed in June 2014, and was the **first multi-speciality 'Alliance' practice in Cumbria** – a partnership between GPs, the community trust, acute trust, social care, ambulance trust and the community.

As **full and equal partners**, representatives of the community (**Millom Health Action Group**) **attend the Millom Alliance communications, operations and steering group meetings** along with the NHS and other partners.

The **community group run all of the alliance communications** along with **organising and leading on a number of health initiatives** focused on service

	improvement and self-care.
<p>Success so far:</p>	<p>The community have led of a number of initiatives including the production of a GP recruitment video which was released in July 2014 and received 5,000 views within the first week. This was spread by the community through social media and tweeted by large numbers of the public.</p> <p>Innovative community focused roles have been introduced including a community paramedic and a community link nurse.</p> <p>Other community led initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented together twice at the Kings Fund ‘What does good look like’ conferences in March 2015 (UHMBT, CPFT, Millom community action group and the GP practice). • Promotion of the pharmacy minor illness scheme resulting in massive increase in its use, from amongst the lowest use to the highest use in Cumbria. This scheme encourages people to go to the pharmacy for a range of minor ailments that people often go to their GP for. This allows the pharmacist to give advice and medication for many self-limiting conditions • In October 2014 created a new town newspaper ‘Around the Coombe’ full of health promotion messages distributed to 5,500 households. The magazine is produced monthly and continues today • Distributed posters on how best to use your health services at Millom carnival • Developed posters on ‘spotting the signs of cancer’ to be displayed locally • Surveyed the town to ask their views and priorities for healthcare. Better Care Together have designed their model to meet as many of the 7 local priorities identified as possible • Developed a type 2 diabetes support group with initial public engagement session • Efforts to make Millom and the surrounding district to become the UK’s first Donor Community • Implementation of Rally Round – a novel technology driveway for volunteer recruitment - aimed at the younger volunteer • Community led Autism training and awareness sessions <p>One of the key aims of Better Care Together is to deliver far more care locally. In the last 12 months of working in partnership with the community we have reduced the number of emergency bed days spent by Millom patients in the Acute hospital by 29%.</p>
<p>Lessons learnt:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All communication with local populations needs to be transparent, open and honest • Working as equal partners with the community has, over time, resulted in improvements for healthcare locally, highlighting the importance of co creation

- This is an example of how community engagement can be replicated in other areas

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