

Dare to Care

Project Evaluation
May 2023

Contents

Executive Summary..... 2

Background..... 3

Aims and Objectives..... 4

Stage 1: Blackpool and Fleetwood..... 5

Stage 2: Blackpool & Fleetwood, Central & Pennine Lancashire..... 11

Conclusions..... 20

Limitations..... 20

Recommendations..... 21

Appendix..... 23



Executive Summary

Dare to Care is a pilot pathway with the aim of developing an integrated volunteer project in health and social care. At all stages, the goals of the project were to strengthen and support the workforce in care homes, which currently face challenges in recruitment and retention, and to provide more support to people in receipt of care. The pilot was initiated by Lancashire & South Cumbria Health & Social Care Partnership (now Lancashire & South Cumbria Health Integrated Care Board) and co-produced with partners including Healthwatch Blackpool, Healthwatch Lancashire (HWL), Blackpool Adult Learning, Blackpool Carers, Blackpool Health and Social Care Academy, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Carers, Regenda and Nyby.

The initial stage of the pathway was launched in June 2021 in Blackpool and Fleetwood, with a second phase commencing in March 2022 which showed the project expand into Central Lancashire and Pennine Lancashire whilst including a digital element. All components of the project ended in March 2023.

Five care homes and three volunteers were recruited onto phase 1 of the project in Blackpool and Fleetwood during June 2021 and March 2022. There were significant recruitment difficulties during this period due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however, there were key learnings from this which informed a more successful second phase of the project.

The second phase of the project included an expansion into Central Lancashire and Pennine Lancashire, as well as continuing with Blackpool and Fleetwood. Twelve volunteers completed their mandatory training and a placement in a care home. Three of these decided to remain as a volunteer once their placement ended.

Despite some clear challenges with recruitment during the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been positive experiences in both phases of the Dare to Care project in all areas due to volunteers learning new skills. Care home managers also had positive feedback about volunteers being able to socialise with residents, freeing up more of their time for caring responsibilities.

Recommendations have been formulated to aid anyone looking to address the ongoing care crisis in their local area through improving collaboration between local government, NHS teams, care homes, charities, volunteers and the private sector.

Background

Dare to Care was first launched in June 2021, with scoping starting in December 2019, as a pilot pathway with the aim of developing an integrated volunteer project in health and social care. The initial stage of the pathway was targeted at informal carers who may be interested in professional careers in the social care sector, achieved by offering them training and a volunteering programme to gain relevant work experience. Later stages of the pathway did not only target informal carers but a broad range of applicants with an interest in the care sector. All components of the project ended in March 2023.

At all stages, the goals of the project were to strengthen and support the workforce in care homes, which currently face challenges in recruitment and retention, and to provide more support to people in receipt of care.

The pilot was initiated by Lancashire & South Cumbria Health & Social Care Partnership (now Lancashire & South Cumbria Health Integrated Care Board) and co-produced with partners including Healthwatch Blackpool, Healthwatch Lancashire (HWL), Blackpool Adult Learning, Blackpool Carers, Blackpool Health and Social Care Academy, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Carers, Regenda and Nyby.

Scoping for the project started in December 2019 and the initial stage of the pilot was implemented in June 2021. This initial stage was successful in supporting care home residents and recruiting volunteers who received training and placements in care homes in Blackpool and Fleetwood. This stage concluded at the end of March 2022 and the project was evaluated, taking into consideration feedback and comments from partners and volunteers.

Evaluation of the pilot highlighted successes, barriers and learning for the future. Considering this evaluation, Dare to Care continued and extended geographically across key sites within Lancashire from March 2022, with a particular focus on Central Lancashire and Pennine Lancashire, and incorporated a new digital component with a new partner, Nyby.

This report is an evaluation of the Dare to Care pilot programme from Healthwatch Lancashire. The evaluation includes activity and feedback gathered from Fleetwood, Blackpool, Central Lancashire and Pennine Lancashire from June 2021 - March 2023.

Aims and Objectives

Aims

The aims of the project were to:

1. Deliver a successful pathway to support people with an interest in a career in care to build on their skills, knowledge and experiences to become job ready to work in a care home
2. Improves the quality and consistency of volunteer provision across the independent regulated care sectors within Lancashire
3. Help build the reputation of the care home sector as a career choice with a view to enhancing value-based recruitment and retention
4. Provide meaningful support to care home residents
5. Continue the work started under the Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project October 2017 – September 2019.

In a later stage of the project, two additional aims were added based on the incorporation of a digital component. These were to:

1. Prove that it is possible to use the digital platform, Nyby for stakeholders to collaborate across organisations within Lancashire (in this case, care homes and volunteering organisations)
2. Understand additional opportunities where Nyby could be used to share tasks between other groups, both to support care homes and in other use cases within Lancashire.

Key Outcomes

The pilot also had key outcome objectives for each of its main stakeholder groups.

Volunteers:

- Receive training and experience to develop skills and knowledge for working in a care home which is recognised and meaningful
- Develop new skills and confidence
- Receive learning and development opportunities and peer support
- Develop career options and become 'job-ready'.

Care homes:

- Gain a new flow of motivated quality volunteers

- Help to build the care sector's reputation as providing a 'career of choice'
- Be part of an integrated partnership to support sector resilience.
- Provide more social opportunities available to residents.

System:

- Gain a strengthened workforce
- Be better prepared for sector growth
- Achieve more integration cross-sector collaboration
- Improve community cohesion.



Stage 1: Blackpool and Fleetwood

The initial phase of Dare to Care was carried out in Fleetwood (delivered by Healthwatch Lancashire) and Blackpool (delivered by Healthwatch Blackpool).

Methodology

5 care homes were recruited to project during June 2021 to March 2022. These were:

- New Victoria Blackpool
- Princess Alexandra Home for the Blind Blackpool
- The ARC
- Haddon Court
- Fleetwood Hall Care Home



Volunteer participants were recruited through predominantly online means as the recruitment period was in the heights of the Covid-19 pandemic. Posters and social media assets were created and circulated on Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackpool's websites, social media channels and through e-newsletters, including a TikTok video. Hard copies of these posters and leaflets were circulated in the community including community centres, GP practices and wellbeing centres. Blackpool's Health and Social Care Academy also actively promoted the project.

Outcomes

36 expressions of interest were received with four volunteers in Blackpool and Fleetwood completing the process of training and placement in care homes.

The below table displays the number of enquiries, completed applications and number of volunteers completing a placement across Blackpool and Fleetwood:

Period	Number of enquiries	Completed applications	Completed mandatory training	Completed placement in a care home	'Job-ready'	Opted to remain as a volunteer
June to Aug 21	7	4	4	0	0	0
Sep to Nov 21	4	3	1	1	1	1
Dec 21 to Mar 22	25	9	4	2	0	1
Total	36	16	9	3	1	2

During June to August 2021, the project was still in development stages despite recruitment being open. Healthwatch Blackpool and Healthwatch Lancashire were working hard to develop working relationships with key stakeholders to drive recruitment and promote the project, as well as finding local community groups in which they could recruit volunteers. In December 2021, funding was provided to the project for 3 months. This allowed Healthwatch to be able to give more resource to the project, in which recruitment increased and printed materials were produced.

The dropout rate between expression of interest and placement was 92% which is reflective of the pressures at the time. There were significant recruitment challenges due to the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, making it difficult to get care homes on board and volunteers recruited. Care home managers were reluctant to bring new staff/volunteers into the home as they were trying to keep infection rates to a minimum which made it difficult to recruit volunteers.

Specific reasons for the participants dropping out were:

- At the time, it was a requirement to have two Covid-19 vaccinations and one volunteer did not have them
- Not meeting the minimum age requirement (19 at the time due to training requirements)
- One volunteer believed the project was for domiciliary care and did not want to volunteer in residential care settings
- Unable to volunteer due to their personal caring commitments changing
- Unable to provide documentation for DBS forms or the time taken to process DBS checks
- Receiving a job offer during the recruitment process
- Lack of face-to-face training opportunities
- Other volunteers did not give a reason for dropping out.

Feedback

Positive feedback was received from all volunteers and helped to clarify their future career prospects. Feedback was collected through either email surveys or interview phone calls depending on the volunteer's preference.

Volunteer case study



Our first day on placement was brilliant! The staff are all so lovely and the residents are really kind - I'm really looking forward to doing the next shift. We had a tour around the home, did a health and safety induction, and then I went downstairs and played games in a small group with dominoes, I had one-to-one chats with some of the residents – even one who was 102!

They were all so lovely. They then had lunch and, in the afternoon, we helped set up for a singer who was visiting and listened to some music with them.



Manager of Fleetwood Hall



I had really good feedback here [from residents], very interactive, engaging, interested, friendly, polite, and courteous to name but a few.



Volunteer case study



Since I started my volunteering with Healthwatch I have been helping out at my local care home. This is where I have been engaging with dementia residents by playing games to stimulate their brains and helping them to join in with activities.

I have also been helping residents move around the home, getting them ready for lunch, as well as calling numbers at bingo. The Healthwatch team have been really helpful in making this happen for me to get a taster of what it's like to work in a care setting.



Volunteer case study



Within a day of applying, Beth responded to me and gave me a call. We arranged a time to meet at the Empowerment base to go through some online training and fill out my DBS form. It was a very quick process, Beth was very friendly and always sorted everything out quickly!

Once my DBS was back and Beth had found a home for me, Beth and myself went to visit The Arc for a show around. All the staff including management were very friendly. For the first few months, Beth accompanied me every time. After each visit, I'd go through what was discussed by the resident and Beth would take notes. I then began going by myself as I felt confident enough due to the support from both Beth and the staff at The Arc.

After every visit, Beth would call me to go through what the resident had talked about and she would make notes. Overall, I would say the programme has been effective in improving my communication skills and my confidence in interacting with different members of the public.

Beth throughout has been consistently supportive and friendly. The staff, although always busy, were friendly and appeared grateful for my help in making the resident's days a little bit brighter.



Manager feedback



We had such great feedback from clients that they really enjoyed the company



Learnings

Although there were some unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic which could not be prevented, there were some key learning points:

- The volunteer role profile should be opened up to anyone with an interest in working in care (the previous role profile targeted young carers and it was

quickly recognised that some young carers did not want to volunteer more time caring than they currently do)

- More volunteer management was required than expected. Allocate the project resource funding so that partner organisations have the staff capacity to deliver the project to a high standard
- Recruitment materials should make clearer which type of care setting volunteers will interact with.

These learnings were used to inform Stage 2 of Dare to Care and a refreshed and expanded programme of work for Dare to Care in Pennine and Central Lancashire. From March 2022, Healthwatch Blackpool took responsibility for the Fleetwood area, as Healthwatch Lancashire moved its responsibility to Central Lancashire and Pennine Lancashire.

Stage 2: Blackpool & Fleetwood, Central & Pennine Lancashire

Pennine Lancashire

New project aims

Discussions between the Lancashire and South Cumbria Health & Care Partnership and other stakeholders began in March 2022 about the prospect of involving a digital element in the next phase of the Dare to Care programme. Based on the evaluation of the first phase of the programme, two major differences were incorporated in the Pennine component of the project.

1. It would include the use of a digital platform (Nyby) to reduce volunteer management time and improve the ability to coordinate activities and communication between care homes, volunteers and other partners
2. Council for Voluntary Service Organisations (CVSs) would be invited into the project to be responsible for recruiting, training and completing safety checks on volunteers for the project. Previously this role had been occupied by Healthwatch Lancashire who took on an advisory and evaluation role.

The Pennine component subsequently has two additional aims incorporated into its project plan:

1. Prove that it is possible to use Nyby to share tasks and collaborate across organisations within Lancashire (in this case, care homes and volunteering organisations)
2. Understand additional opportunities where Nyby could be used to share tasks between other groups, both to support care homes and in other environments within Lancashire.

Methodology

Nyby

The inclusion of the app (see Appendix) into the programme allowed care home staff to post activity opportunities onto the digital platform for approved participants (volunteers) to respond to the opportunities that suit them best.

To ensure that the opportunities posted were relevant to both care home residents and volunteers, Nyby organised co-production workshops with participating care homes and CVSs.

Based on the outcomes of the workshops, volunteers could support with activities including:

- Well-being activities in the home e.g. singing or chatting with residents,
- Helping with practical tasks e.g. gardening
- Providing transport assistance (where appropriate)
- Accompanying residents on walks
- Taking residents life histories

The app made it easy for staff to make requests for support from volunteers and teams in other organisations in a safe, secure and flexible way.

The platform also allowed teams at Lancashire County Council to track the networks of support that were available across their communities with the aim of seeing new ways to plug gaps for vulnerable people.

CVS

Two CVS (Burnley Pendle & Rossendale and Hyndburn & Ribble Valley) organisations were involved in the Pennine project from March 2022 until December 2022. The CVS were responsible for recruiting and training the volunteers. This included safeguarding adults, safeguarding children, data protection, roles and responsibilities and communication. Any additional training required by the care home was conducted by the care home.

Due to funding and capacity reasons, both CVS could not continue the project from October 2022. There was a handover process with Healthwatch Lancashire who continued to support existing volunteers.

Four care homes were recruited for the project in the Pennine Lancashire. These were:

- St Andrew's House
- GS Social Care
- Willowbank Nursing Home
- Palace House Care Home

Outcomes

Period	Number of enquiries	Completed applications	Completed mandatory training	Completed placement in a care home	'Job-ready'	Opted to remain as a volunteer
June to Aug 21	19	18	8	0	0	0
Sep to Nov 21	0	0	0	5	3	1
Dec 21 to Mar 22	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	19	18	8	5	3	1

Feedback

Feedback was gathered from both CVS organisations and care home managers.

CVS feedback

What went well?

- Overall, both CVSs were positive about their involvement with the project. They both provided positive feedback about using the Nyby platform and highlighted its potential in recruiting and maintaining volunteers. Initial training on the app was good and ongoing support given by Nyby throughout the project was appreciated.
- The flexibility provided by the Nyby platform was also highlighted; because volunteers could give their time on an ad-hoc basis and choose which tasks suit them best, they did not feel tied to committing a specific amount of time each week. A lack of this type of flexibility in more traditional volunteering can be off-putting to many volunteers and may be contributing to the lack of volunteers in the care sector.
- By utilising the Nyby platform, volunteers chose tasks which they enjoyed. As a result, volunteers could tailor the programme to suit their preferences and gain the experience they were looking for. This factor helped contribute to the overall success of the project.

What could have been better?

- The care homes initially enrolled on the programme in Hyndburn & Ribble Valley catered for a variety of needs ranging from residential care to complex medical care. These care homes did not cater for older adults (in line with a common understanding of a 'care home setting') but for those with learning disabilities, brain injuries and neurological conditions. It became clear that volunteers had expected care home settings more in line with a more common view of catering for older adults. Although the

volunteers continued with the project, this could have been made clearer in the recruitment process to ensure volunteers' expectations were met. Involving a care home that offered residential care to older adults from the start could have been included in the Hyndburn & Ribble Valley area of the project to offer volunteers more options in the environment they were to volunteer in (this was achieved later in the project)

- One barrier experienced by both CVSs and their volunteers was that there were periods where not enough tasks were being posted on the Nyby app by the care home staff and so volunteers did not have many opportunities. During these periods, the volunteers felt less engaged with the project. Disengagement sometimes led to volunteers being slower to respond when tasks were eventually posted. The learnings from this challenge were that more volunteers were needed so someone was always available to respond to tasks and care homes need to post regular and meaningful opportunities.
- A final challenge experienced by CVSs was capacity. They received no funding or resource for their participation in the project and so it was a challenge to sustain the project alongside their other commitments, especially given the time limits. This led to them withdrawing from the project and handing volunteer management responsibilities to Healthwatch Lancashire.

Care home manager feedback

What went well?

- Overall, care home managers expressed that they would recommend Dare to Care and the use of the Nyby platform to other care homes/organisations as a way to work with volunteers.
- The Nyby platform was found to be easy to use and navigate, and the support received from Nyby was acknowledged. Managers felt that the platform had great potential, but more time and volunteers would be needed to see its full potential. Once there was a larger, more consistent cohort of volunteers, care homes could post more tasks on a weekly basis and feel confident that these would be picked up.
- Positive feedback has been received from the residents of the care homes who have enjoyed the activities they have done with the volunteers and have had positive interactions with them.
- For those volunteers who have picked up tasks, care home managers expressed that these volunteers were suitable for the role, knew what they wanted to achieve out of the experience and had an interest in a career in care. Volunteers were paired with another member of staff to ensure they felt confident and supported in their role.
- Regarding relieving care home staff pressures, feedback suggests that Dare to Care has helped with staff pressures. Having volunteers within the care homes, helped alleviate staff pressures as they were assured that residents were occupied with volunteers and enjoying their time.

What could have been better?

- Care home managers also thought that volunteers were not made enough aware that the care homes offered more complex medical care.
- In the initial stages of the project, care homes had to rely on senior staff to understand the platform, post tasks and introduce volunteers to the home and residents which may have added to the pressure of senior staff in the short term. However, this was expected during the introduction of the project and once volunteers have been recruited, more tasks can be posted and accepted by volunteers.
- Suggestions made to increase the success of the project included:
 - Knowing more about the volunteers' interests before they started posting tasks so that there was scope to tailor the tasks to each volunteer ensuring the volunteers got even more out of the project.
 - The ability to see in advance when volunteers were available so they can forward plan activities.
 - They wanted to be able to post recurrent tasks so that volunteers could sometimes commit to tasks with more regular frequency. As this was not made available, one volunteer arranged a weekly schedule with the care home, but this was not done through the platform. As a result, data was not recorded. The ability to post recurring tasks was introduced and utilised later in the project.

Success story

One volunteer, a former GP who retired in 2016 started volunteering in two care homes in September 2022. They wanted to find a way to use their time to continue to help others. Speaking about the volunteer, Manager of Willowbank Nursing Home in Burnley said:

“When the volunteer comes, they really brighten the residents’ day. Some of the residents they talk with don’t get anyone else to visit them so it’s heartwarming to watch. Their faces light up when we say they are coming.”

The volunteer visits to Willowbank has inspired the manager to set up weekly Chit Chat Club sessions for new volunteers to come and meet residents in a relaxed setting. Many of the residents of Willowbank have Dementia or Alzheimer's so staff are excited to have found a new way for residents to be stimulated and connected that doesn't pull on the staff's already short time and resources.

Central Lancashire

Methodology

The Dare to Care expansion into Central Lancashire, had the same aims as the previous pilot project in Blackpool and Fleetwood. Eventually, the aim was to also incorporate the digital component tested in Pennine but the project did not receive the required funding to continue before this could be achieved. This part of the project ran from March 2022 until May 2023.

Across Central Lancashire, one care home was recruited. Healthwatch Lancashire used their intelligence through their Enter and View programme to identify care homes which would be suitable for the project. These care home involved was Cornmill Nursing Home.

A second care home was also interested in being involved, however, no additional volunteers were recruited due to lack of interest.

To try and increase recruitment, Healthwatch Lancashire focused recruitment on students undertaking studies in Health & Social Care. At the end of the project, two volunteers, both students of Health & Social Care were active in care homes after coming through the programme.

Period	Number of enquiries	Completed applications	Completed mandatory training	Completed placement in a care home	'Job-ready'	Opted to remain as a volunteer
Sep to Nov 21	37	0	0	0	0	0
Dec 21 to Mar 22	10	3	2	0	0	0
Apr 22 to May 22	0	0	0	2	2	1
Total	47	3	2	2	2	1

Volunteer case study



I am really happy I got the chance to experience working in a care home as before now, I wasn't fully aware of what was required. It has truly opened my eyes and it has been a really rewarding experience. I helped residents with activities, interacted with them and played games. I was providing company for them.

I would say the only challenge I experienced was when residents asked me to move them such as sit them up, take them to the toilet or move them to outside. I was unable to do any of these as I hadn't had the relevant training and I sometimes felt a little sad about this. I'm glad I got to experience the good days but also some of the not so good days. When some of the residents became upset or distressed, I did my best to assist them.

The communication between myself and the staff worked really well and I would say that this volunteering has given me more patience and I listen more. I made some good relationships with residents and I was sad to leave.

Whilst working at the care home, they offered me employment. However, at this point I am concentrating on getting through my courses and then going to university. The home said anytime I need a job, just to enquire. Overall, I'm really glad I got the opportunity.



Volunteer case study



My experience at the care home was really amazing. I did activities with the residents and it felt really rewarding being able to make the residents feel better and assist them to join in on activities. I also managed to involve some of the residents who wouldn't normally join and it put a huge smile on their faces.

There were a few challenges when some of the residents were distressed and wanted repositioning in their chair or wanted to go back to their rooms. I wasn't able to help them as I didn't have moving and handling training.

I have learnt many skills such as communication and listening skills. I also learnt about people's different needs and requirements.

It was a really lovely environment and a lovely care home. Dare to Care has helped me gain employment at the care home.



Blackpool

Methodology

Phase Two of the Dare to Care program in Blackpool marked a significant milestone in our journey. Despite the absence of a digital option, we had an invaluable addition of a dedicated Volunteer Officer to support the project. This decision enabled us to nurture volunteers and gather interest via a range of community events.

Period	Number of enquiries	Completed applications	Completed mandatory training	Completed placement in a care home	'Job-ready'	Opted to remain as a volunteer
Total	40	23	8	5	3	1

Outcomes

One of the standout successes of this phase was the overwhelming dedication and engagement we gathered directly from our local colleges. Through a series of engaging lectures, we were able to ignite a spark of interest in volunteering for care homes. The response was inspiring, with a surge in applications from individuals eager to contribute their time and skills to support those in need.

Our efforts extended beyond recruitment, as we actively sought out and enlisted additional care homes that shared a genuine interest in participating in the project. This expansion allowed to match our volunteers directly with care homes on their doorsteps.

One outcome of Phase Two, which is to be celebrated was witnessing the transformation of two people who were unemployed, gaining meaningful employment in the sector, through their involvement in the program. This accomplishment reaffirmed the profound impact Dare 2 Care can have on the lives of not only care home residents but also our dedicated volunteers.



Feedback



"It's been great, I mostly just talk to residents and I hosted some bingo"

"I talk to the residents as they haven't been wanting to do much due to the weather. I see X quite a lot and some of the others. I am comfortable chatting to them. We join in with music".

"Just because of you, I've got the job. Thank you from my heart"

"Talking to the residents, playing games, facilitating bingo and karaoke. I am happy doing volunteering. Talking to the residents, some of them don't have

family so I feel sorry for them – it's nice and rewarding to be that person for them outside of the home. I like to encourage them to do things."

"I'm really good at talking to the residents and it's helping me to overcome my social anxiety."

"It's improved my confidence and it makes me think like I have given a good service"



Conclusions

Despite some clear challenges with recruitment during the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been positive experiences in both phases of the Dare to Care project in all areas. Volunteers have learned new skills and enjoyed interacting with care home residents. Care home managers have had positive experiences with volunteers who have been able to socialise with residents, leaving more time for staff to carry out their caring role. Positive feedback was also received from care home managers and residents about Nyby, demonstrating that digital resources can be utilised to help with volunteer coordination.

Healthwatch Blackpool recognise that while they faced the limitations of not having a digital element, their determination, passion, and the support of their community have been instrumental in achieving engagement.

The introduction of a dedicated Volunteer Officer for both Lancashire and Blackpool was pivotal in driving the success of phase 2. It allowed us to drive strong community engagement, as evidenced by the impressive turnout of applications. Our efforts also led to the inclusion of additional care homes, expanding the reach of our programme.

A particularly heart-warming outcome was the positive impact on the lives of two individuals who transitioned from unemployment to meaningful employment through their involvement in the project.

Limitations

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations encountered during Dare to Care in all areas:

1. Lack of digital options: The absence of a digital element limited our ability to efficiently manage volunteer activities and communication, which could have been improved with the integration of digital tools (Blackpool specific)
2. Dedicated resource: While we successfully recruited a Volunteer Officer, resource constraints may pose challenges in sustaining dedicated support for future phases. Ongoing funding and resource allocation should be considered for growth and scale.
3. Scale and scope: Despite the successes achieved, the scope of Phase Two was limited to a specific area. Expanding Dare 2 Care's reach to cover a broader geographic area should be explored.
4. Measurement and evaluation: A more comprehensive system for measuring and evaluating the impact of the program on volunteers and care home residents should be developed to assess its long-term benefits.

Recommendations

These recommendations have been collated to aid anyone looking to address the ongoing care crisis in their local area through improving collaboration between local government, NHS teams, care homes, charities, volunteers and the private sector.

1. Have a named full-time lead role responsible for the coordination of the project who is well resourced. Dare to Care worked best when it had one project lead from Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Health Board. When this role was lost, coordination between the various organisations slowed and became more difficult.
2. Ensure that care home staff commit to providing a good level of activity for volunteers to respond to. When and where care homes posted lower levels of activity, volunteers become less engaged and more time had to be used to reengage them. The Nyby app also operated most successfully with a high number of volunteers and a high number of tasks posted by care homes.
3. Try to include a range of care homes (offering a range of care needs). Volunteers have a range of interests and different areas they want to learn more about so having a range of care settings improves chances of matching interest to setting.
4. Communicate clearly what each care home offers. Some volunteers categorically do not want to work in certain environments so it is better they are fully informed about what type of care each setting provides before they arrive at the care home.
5. Provide care home managers with more information about volunteers' interests so they can match them up with tasks of interest. This saves time for both care home staff and volunteers.
6. Be strategic when you launch the project. Dare to Care Pennine had to be launched in the summer and this caused delays in progress due to staff, stakeholders and volunteers being on holiday.
7. Be targeting where you promote your project. Healthwatch Lancashire covers a large geographical area and as the project was advertised online across owned channels so they received expressions of interest from the whole county, including in the north where there were no participating care homes.
8. Target more colleges, universities and student events to recruit young people with a genuine interest in a career in care and looking for experience. Some of the most enthusiastic and consistent volunteers in Dare to Care were health & social care students. Tailoring a volunteering stream to fit their interests would be beneficial to similar projects.

9. When recruiting students, flexibility is key. Students in Dare to Care preferred a block placement to fit with their studies, rather than a few hours every week for six weeks.
10. Try to maintain consistency with project partners. The handover from the CVSs to Healthwatch Lancashire was difficult and often confusing. The lack of funding meant that the capacity of the CVS was limited and communication was often unclear. This led to delays, causing volunteers to become disengaged.
11. Maintain strong partnerships: Strengthen partnerships with local care homes and organisations to expand the network of support. Collaboration was key to broadening the impact of the Dare to Care programme in Blackpool. Of significance was the support from our Provider Hub and Forums.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Nyby



Nyby is a resource-sharing app and digital platform that frees up time for health & care staff and helps to get more support to those who need it. The app makes it easy for staff to make requests for support from volunteers and teams in other organisations in a safe, secure and flexible way. The platform also allows managers to track the networks of support that are active across communities and see new ways to plug gaps for vulnerable people. It has been successful in relieving workforce pressures and making early intervention savings for local governments, healthcare organisations and charities across Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany and it is being piloted in the UK.

The inclusion of the app into the programme allowed care home staff to post activity opportunities onto the digital platform for approved participants (volunteers) to respond to the opportunities that suit them best. Volunteers could support with activities such as singing or chatting with residents, helping with gardening, providing transport assistance, and accompanying residents on walks.



Healthwatch Lancashire
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