

NHS Winter Pressures Programme - Calderdale

2025/2026



NHS Winter Pressures Programme CALDERDALE 2025/26

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Executive Summary

The 2025/26 Winter Pressures Programme in Calderdale strengthens the local health and care system's ability to respond to increased winter demand on urgent and emergency care services. Delivered by VAC in partnership with the VCSE sector, and local NHS partners, the programme centred on three core initiatives—Winter Messaging, Winter Care Packs and the VCSE Directory—which collectively supported Calderdale's diverse communities to access the right care at the right time, reducing pressure on urgent and emergency care and increasing confidence in using NHS services.

This year's Winter Messaging campaign expanded its reach, with VCSE organisations—trusted and embedded within local neighbourhoods—playing a key role in delivering health advice, encouraging self-care, promoting community pharmacy services and supporting people to use the NHS App. Through face-to-face conversations, group sessions, drop-ins and social media activity, the campaign successfully increased awareness and confidence among residents.

The Winter Care Packs initiative distributed 3,000 packs to vulnerable people across Calderdale. Supported by volunteers from local businesses and schools, packs were assembled more efficiently than ever before. Feedback showed that VCSE organisations felt confident sharing key messages, recipients found the support meaningful, and the packs helped initiate important conversations around winter wellbeing.

The VCSE Directory continued to grow as a year-round resource, with 4,500 printed copies distributed and increased digital access via the VAC website. The directory provides clear, accessible information on 95 services across Calderdale—supporting better signposting, improving awareness of community provision and strengthening shared understanding across partners.

Across the programme, several areas of learning emerged, including the benefits of online request systems, early communication with VCSE partners, availability of translated materials and increased collaboration with NHS Digital and Community Pharmacy. VCSE organisations also highlighted the importance of face-to-face engagement, trusted relationships, simple toolkits and year-round visibility of health messaging. These insights will inform the 2026/27 programme, ensuring continued improvement and stronger system resilience.

Overall, the 2025/26 Winter Pressures Programme effectively supported Calderdale residents through the most challenging period of the year. Through partnership working, community-led delivery and targeted messaging, the programme contributed to improved digital and health literacy, safer winter wellbeing and reduced avoidable pressure on urgent and emergency care services.

Introduction

Winter is a challenging time for the NHS, particularly for urgent and emergency services. Over the past 5 years the voluntary, community & social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Calderdale has been a critical health and care partner, playing a vital role in ensuring our communities have access to the right information and support as demand on NHS services increases. Through the delivery of three core initiatives:

- Targeted Winter Messaging
- Winter Care Packs
- The VCSE Directory

The Winter Pressure Programme supports Calderdale and Huddersfield Urgent and Emergency Care Board in achieving its key priorities. These include reducing attendance and waiting times at emergency departments and freeing up capacity in GP surgeries.

The “Together We Can” campaign across West Yorkshire continues to support the Winter Pressures Programme by helping people access the right health and care services at the right time and place. It also encourages people to choose well and to opt for convenient self-care, where safe to do so, during the winter months, reducing demand on GP practices and emergency departments for minor health concerns.

Our VCSE sector organisations in Calderdale play a vital role in the success of the Winter Pressures Programme, with their understanding of the local area and target populations and how to engage with them effectively. These strong, trusted community links can reach our diverse communities, including those who are seldom heard.

Winter Messaging Campaign

Locally, the NHS acknowledges that vital health and wellbeing messages do not always reach Calderdale’s diverse communities in an effective way. VCSE organisations hold strong, long-standing relationships with the communities they work with and the people they support. Their involvement is therefore crucial in helping to ensure that these messages are delivered in ways that are accessible, trusted and acted upon.

Process Overview

Stage	Process Overview
1	Agree on target groups and key messages
2	Communicate the opportunity to Calderdale VCSE sector organisations
3	Briefing and expressions of interest
4	Proposals
5	NHS App Community Ambassador training
6	Deliver Messaging
7	Feedback
8	Community Journalist video

Target Groups

Winter Messaging prioritises groups most vulnerable to winter illnesses and those who frequently use emergency services. These include:

- **Vulnerable Adults:** Individuals aged 65 and over, those with long-term health conditions.
- **Parents and Carers:** Parents of children under 12 years, particularly those aged 0 – 5 years.
- **People with Lower-Level Illnesses:** Targeting those under 40 with minor health conditions.
- **Seldom-Heard Communities:** Including minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, and individuals experiencing social and economic deprivation.

Key messages

Last year (2024/25), the winter messaging campaign focused on promoting the services offered by local community pharmacies, alongside targeted messaging from the “Together We Can” campaign aimed at audiences in two geographical areas of Calderdale (North and Central) that data had highlighted were presenting at urgent and emergency care services with low acuity conditions. Following the success of the 2024/25 campaign, it was agreed, in partnership with Calderdale Cares Partnership, to continue both focuses this year and to expand the messaging campaign to reach a wider audience across the entire borough.

The winter messaging campaign also introduced an additional focus on promoting the NHS App. In line with the NHS 10-Year Health Plan, which aims to transition services from “analogue to digital,” the NHS App is positioned to become the primary “digital front door” to NHS services by 2028.

Community Pharmacies

VAC produced an information leaflet to promote the wide range of services available at Community Pharmacies. Evidence shows that advice provided by community pharmacists for minor illnesses can achieve outcomes comparable to those from a GP appointment or a visit to an emergency department. Feedback from last year’s winter messaging campaign highlighted that, although community pharmacies are widely used, many people were unaware of the full breadth of services they offer and viewed them primarily as places to collect prescriptions. This year’s winter messaging, therefore, aimed to increase awareness across more Calderdale communities, emphasising that community pharmacies improve access to healthcare by offering convenient, walk-in support for minor conditions and helping to reduce pressure on GP practices and emergency services. They act as accessible local health hubs, providing expert medication advice, screenings, vaccinations and preventative care.

Copies of the key messaging materials can be found at Appendix 1

Together We Can ‘Stay Well’

All communities have an important role in protecting themselves and those around them during the winter months. Supporting the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership’s long-standing Together We Can campaign, this year’s messaging continued to encourage people to make informed choices about their care and to use self-care options where safe and appropriate. The campaign aims to increase understanding, promote good health, and ensure the appropriate use of NHS services. To maintain interest and keep the messages relevant, the campaign was refreshed for 2025/26, with new materials that retained the core messages—providing self-care tips, information on local services, and signposting to togetherwe-can.com for further guidance. These updated designs help prevent audiences from becoming desensitised to recurring campaigns, while the consistent overarching Together We Can branding reinforces recognition and trust, enabling communities to quickly identify the information as reliable and familiar.

Copies of the key messaging materials can be found at Appendix 1

NHS App

A key element of the NHS Long Term Plan is that, by 2028, the NHS App will act as the “digital front door” to NHS services, providing patients with convenient access to care and information. To realise this ambition, it is recognised that the barriers preventing people from downloading or confidently using the App must be identified and addressed. Introducing the NHS App as a focus within this year’s Winter Messaging campaign is one of the ways the NHS in Calderdale is contributing to this goal—supporting people who face barriers to download the App, increasing awareness of its functions, and encouraging regular, everyday use.

As part of this year’s campaign. Engagement Champions and VCSE sector organisations were asked to become NHS App Community Ambassadors in Calderdale. These ambassadors play a crucial role by assisting people in discovering the App, demonstrating how to use it, and supporting those who may find digital tools challenging. Championing the App among their communities, highlighting its benefits and helping users understand its features.

Working in partnership with a member of the NHS Digital Team, VAC provided Engagement Champions and VCSE organisations with training to ensure they had the skills and information needed to raise awareness of the NHS App and to support their communities in downloading and using it confidently. Ongoing support is available for the NHS App Community Ambassadors in Calderdale, giving them a point of contact for queries and further information so they can continue this valuable role beyond the Winter Messaging campaign.

Copies of the key messaging materials can be found at Appendix 1

Communicate opportunity to the VCSE

The Winter Messaging opportunity was communicated through:

- Newsflash to VAC mailing list
- VAC bulletin
- Direct mailing and 1:1 meetings with [Engagement Champions \(ECs\)](#)

VAC outlined the scope (target groups/geographical area) and purpose of the Winter Messaging Campaign and asked interested organisations to book onto the online briefing session through [Eventbrite](#).

Briefing Session

To ensure the ask was communicated and understood by the VCSE organisations expressing an interest to take part, they were asked to attend an online briefing session, which was recorded and sent to all organisations, should they need to refer back to it at any point. The briefing gave further information about the target groups and examples of the types of minor health conditions that people in these groups present with.

VCSE organisations that support these target groups, have lots of experience, knowledge and ideas about the most appropriate and effective methods and activities to engage with their communities around these key messages. The briefing session was an opportunity to discuss these methods, approaches, ideas and support needed from VAC and health partners. Following the briefing, organisations were asked to submit their proposals, setting out the different methods and approaches that best meet the needs of their communities, along with associated costs and confirm their interest to attend NHS App Community Ambassador training. The briefing session slides and NHS App Community Ambassador training are included at Appendix 2.

Proposals

VCSE organisations expressing an interest in the opportunity provided a proposal on the engagement methods(s) they planned to use, the target groups it was aimed at and the number of people this was likely to reach. In view of the open brief, payment was agreed according to engagement methods suggested by organisations to be made at the end of the project.

In total, 14 organisations expressed their interest in being involved. VAC reviewed the proposals, talking through the detail with some organisations where clarity of the activity or a review of the funding requested was required. 14 initiatives were approved with a completion date of end of February 2026.

Organisations

Advancement of Community Empowerment CIC	Engagement Champion
Focus 4 Hope	Engagement Champion
Grassroots	Engagement Champion
Healthy Living Partnership	Engagement Champion
Mums on a Mission	Engagement Champion
Our Place	Engagement Champion
Overgate	Engagement Champion
Project Colt	Engagement Champion
Space @ Field Lane	VCSE Organisation
Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub	Engagement Champion
Women's Activity Centre	Engagement Champion
Youth Social	VCSE Organisation
Invictus	Engagement Champion
Light Up BAHC	Engagement Champion

Delivering Messaging

Between November 2025 and February 2026, 13 winter-health messaging initiatives were delivered, despite ongoing capacity challenges within the VCSE sector. These initiatives provided accessible winter-health advice through established community networks, demonstrated how to download and use the NHS App, and supported residents with booking appointments, ordering prescriptions, and navigating local care pathways. Collectively, the activities encouraged appropriate use of health services and helped reduce pressure on urgent and emergency care.

Messaging Materials

Printed and electronic versions of the key messaging materials were available to organisations and were available in different community languages if requested.

Merchandise

Leveraging the bulk-purchase power of the Winter Care Pack Campaign, we were able to supply participating Winter Messaging organisations with thermal hats, first aid kits, "Together We Can" keyring torches, and a roller banner designed by VAC in collaboration with Calderdale Cares Partnership to support the promotion of the key messages at community venues and events.

This year, winter messaging was directly supported by Community Pharmacy and NHS Digital team. Colleagues kindly gave up their time to take part in a number of the winter messaging activities being delivered by groups. This enabled members of our diverse Calderdale communities to speak to and seek advice and information directly from those delivering NHS health and wellbeing services.

Messaging Activities

This year, to deliver the winter messaging, organisations taking part used a variety of methods to ensure that the messages were delivered in the most impactful way for their communities. Methods included incorporating the messaging activity into their own activities, drop-in sessions, attendance at youth groups, family sessions and the use of social media broadcasting media. The participating organisations have provided summary reports on their activities, often including photographs or videos and service user feedback, and these can be found in the appendices below.

Appendix 4- A.C.E (Advancement of Community Empowerment CIC)

Appendix 5- Focus 4 Hope

Appendix 6- Grassroots Family CIC

Appendix 7- Healthy Living Partnership

Appendix 8- Invictus Wellbeing

Appendix 9- Light Up BAHC

Appendix 10- Mums on a Mission

Appendix 11- Our Place

Appendix 12- Project Colt

Appendix 13- Space @ Field Lane

Appendix 14- Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub

Appendix 15- Womens Activity Centre

Appendix 16- Youth Social

VAC Comms

During the Campaign Period, VAC's Communications Team regularly shared on Facebook Winter messaging posts from organisations taking part and key messages from [Calderdale Cares \(@calderdalecares\) / X](#)



VAC created a short video to showcase how our NHS Community Ambassadors in Calderdale have been supporting people who face barriers to download the NHS App, increase awareness of its functions, and encourage regular, everyday use.

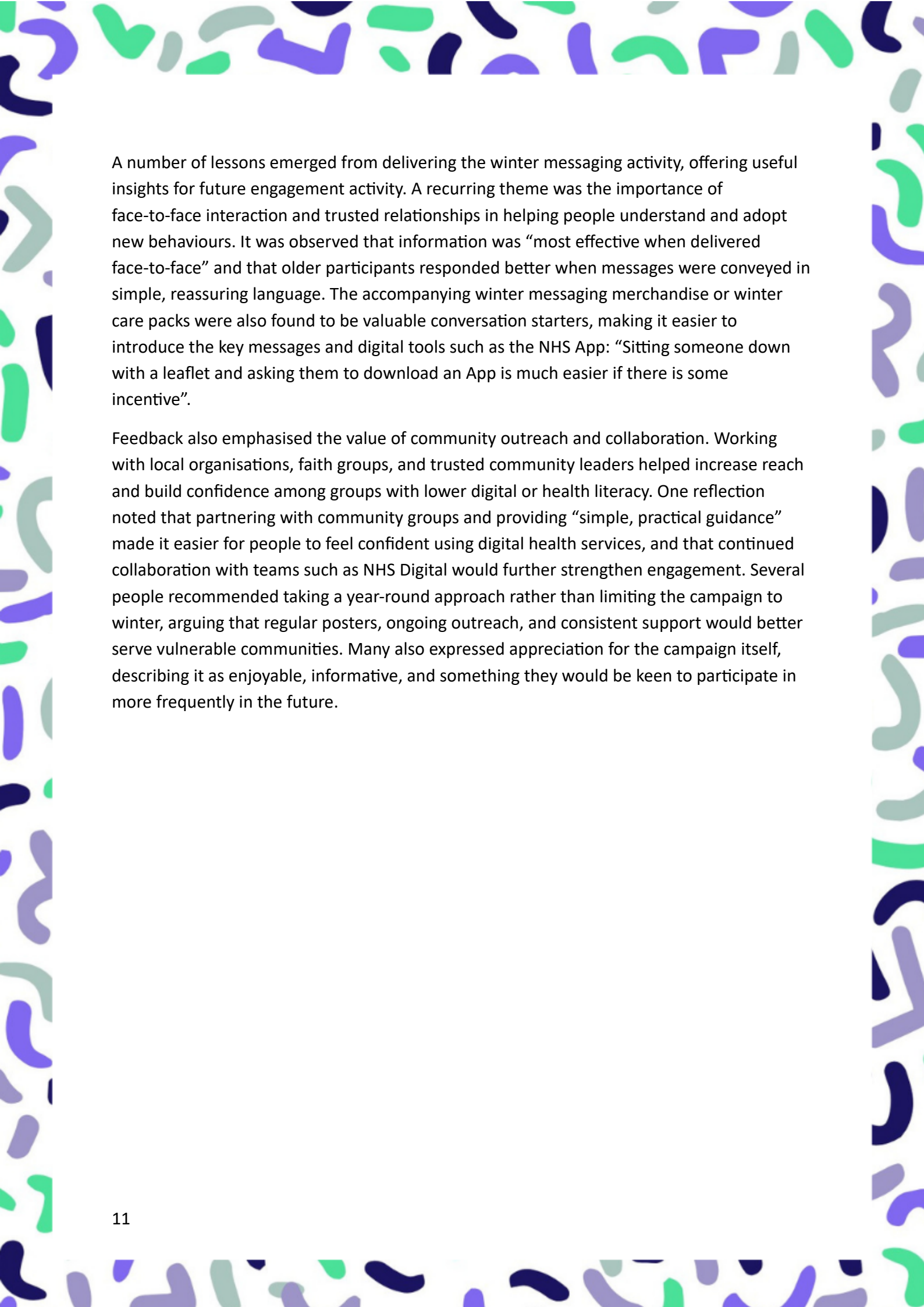


Feedback

The feedback received from VCSE organisations delivering Winter Messaging at the end of the campaign supports VAC and the NHS locally to continually improve the process, understand how key messages are received and gather insight to inform future campaigns.

The winter messaging initiative had a strong and positive impact on the people who engaged with it, particularly in increasing awareness and confidence around using NHS services. Many participants gained a clearer understanding of how to access their health information digitally, with several noting they had learned to use the NHS App to check test results, order repeat prescriptions, and book appointments. As one contributor explained, “many members of our community have learned how to use the NHS App to order repeat prescriptions, check their health records, and book appointments”. Others highlighted practical benefits of improved knowledge about pharmacy services, such as a participant who avoided a GP appointment after receiving a shingles diagnosis and treatment directly from the pharmacy. Support was also beneficial for vulnerable individuals, including an elderly woman recovering from a fall, with staff reinforcing that engagement in community activities would help ensure “she won’t feel isolated and lonely when she is in respite and also at home”. These examples show how the campaign helped people feel more empowered and better connected to both digital health tools and local support networks.

A number of challenges were identified that people face when accessing information and digital confidence. Misinformation was identified as a major issue, making trusted sources especially important for community members seeking health advice. Digital literacy also emerged as a significant barrier, with many older participants needing reassurance and support to feel comfortable using the NHS App. One piece of feedback highlighted “building confidence in using App technology and reassuring them that information is safe” as a key challenge. Digital access issues for elderly people were also mentioned, though some groups were able to mitigate this through on-site IT support. Additional challenges included language barriers, lack of smartphones or internet access, and a “generational fear of change,” which collectively made it harder for some individuals to engage fully with winter health messages or digital tools. However, it was noted that with guidance, support and partnership working, many of these barriers could be reduced.



A number of lessons emerged from delivering the winter messaging activity, offering useful insights for future engagement activity. A recurring theme was the importance of face-to-face interaction and trusted relationships in helping people understand and adopt new behaviours. It was observed that information was “most effective when delivered face-to-face” and that older participants responded better when messages were conveyed in simple, reassuring language. The accompanying winter messaging merchandise or winter care packs were also found to be valuable conversation starters, making it easier to introduce the key messages and digital tools such as the NHS App: “Sitting someone down with a leaflet and asking them to download an App is much easier if there is some incentive”.

Feedback also emphasised the value of community outreach and collaboration. Working with local organisations, faith groups, and trusted community leaders helped increase reach and build confidence among groups with lower digital or health literacy. One reflection noted that partnering with community groups and providing “simple, practical guidance” made it easier for people to feel confident using digital health services, and that continued collaboration with teams such as NHS Digital would further strengthen engagement. Several people recommended taking a year-round approach rather than limiting the campaign to winter, arguing that regular posters, ongoing outreach, and consistent support would better serve vulnerable communities. Many also expressed appreciation for the campaign itself, describing it as enjoyable, informative, and something they would be keen to participate in more frequently in the future.

Winter Care Packs

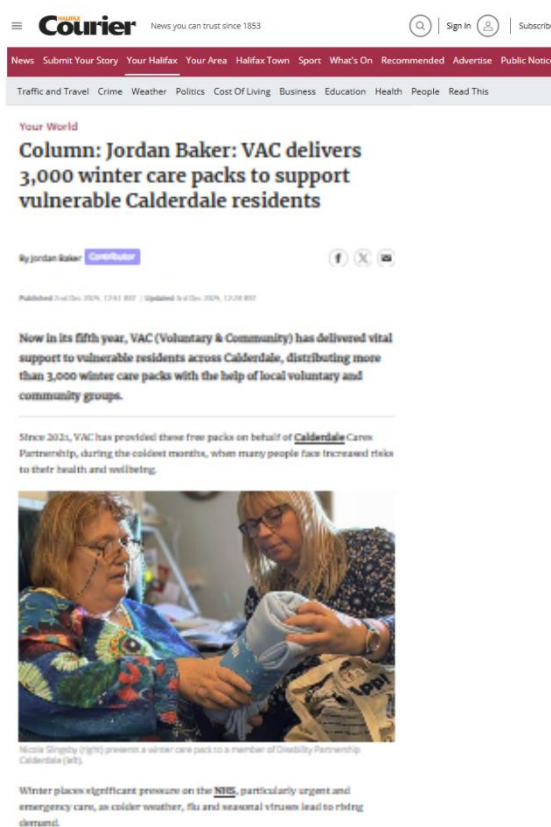
With the support of the VCSE sector, VAC produced and distributed 3000 winter care packs to Calderdale residents, identified as needing extra support during the winter months. The care packs provide items and information to help people who are frail and vulnerable, have limited resources or difficult personal circumstances to stay well and warm, making a meaningful difference to local lives.

Community Journalist story in the Courier

[Column: Jordan Baker: VAC delivers 3,000 winter care packs to support vulnerable Calderdale residents](#)

Dr Farrukh Javid, GP in Calderdale and Chair of the Calderdale and Huddersfield Urgent and Emergency Care Board, said:

“We recognise the vital role that Voluntary and Community organisations in Calderdale play in ensuring important health messages reach our communities. Winter is a particularly challenging time for the NHS, especially for urgent and emergency services. The VAC Winter Pressures Programme continues to play a crucial role in encouraging people to ‘choose well’ during times of significant pressure on health and care services.”



The screenshot shows a news article on the Courier website. The article title is "Column: Jordan Baker: VAC delivers 3,000 winter care packs to support vulnerable Calderdale residents". The author is Jordan Baker, a Contributor. The article is dated 1st Dec 2024, 12:43:00. The text of the article states: "Now in its fifth year, VAC (Voluntary & Community) has delivered vital support to vulnerable residents across Calderdale, distributing more than 3,000 winter care packs with the help of local voluntary and community groups." It also mentions that since 2021, VAC has provided these free packs on behalf of Calderdale Care Partnership, during the coldest months, when many people face increased risks to their health and wellbeing. Below the text is a photograph of Nicola Singely (right) presenting a winter care pack to a member of the Disability Partnership Calderdale (left). A caption below the photo reads: "Nicola Singely (right) presents a winter care pack to a member of Disability Partnership Calderdale (left)." Below the photo is a short paragraph: "Winter places significant pressure on the NHS, particularly urgent and emergency care, as colder weather, flu and seasonal viruses lead to rising demand."

VAC created a short video where recipients were able to share their experiences firsthand and provide viewers with a more in-depth understanding of the Winter Care Packs and wider Winter pressures Programme.



Process Overview

Stage	Process Overview
1	Source and order pack contents
2	Communicate offer to Calderdale VCSE sector organisations
3	Onboard volunteers help to support packing and distribution
4	Distribution of packs and communication toolkit
5	Gather feedback
6	Community Journalist video

Winter Care Pack Contents



Alongside practical items, each pack reinforces key winter wellbeing messages with printed materials, encouraging the use of online NHS services and community pharmacies for minor illnesses, sharing tips for staying warm, and offering guidance on when to use urgent or emergency care.

To ensure that key messages reached all our diverse Calderdale communities, organisations could request flyers/information leaflets in community languages.

Communicating to the VCSE Sector

Communications went out at the end of October to the VCSE in Calderdale, inviting them to complete a request form to express their interest in supporting the distribution of packs. In 2024, VAC introduced the online order form, which, based on feedback from organisations involved, had streamlined the process and enabled a greater collection of data on groups distributing the packs and recipients. VAC Communications team created a stop motion video to showcase the contents and to create excitement for the pack's arrival.



Volunteer Involvement

As part of the effort to prepare Winter Care Packs, a volunteering opportunity was extended to businesses as part of our [B2P Connect Project](#), which supports VCSE organisations by connecting them with local businesses and hub volunteers for support in assembling the packs.

To coincide with World Kindness Day, the amazing students from Rishworth School and staff from BAM Nuttall kindly donated their time to support VAC in getting the packs ready. The volunteers filled each care pack with the printed materials and BAM volunteers helped sort the merchandise into bulk orders. This enabled us to get all orders out within a record 2 weeks. Their commitment and teamwork enabled a quick turnaround, ensuring that the packs were ready for distribution on time. The involvement of both corporate and student volunteers was instrumental in the success of this project. Their willingness to support the community highlights the impact of collaboration in delivering essential resources to communities in Calderdale.



Distribution of Packs

On completion of the fulfilment process, care packs were allocated, and groups used the online form to book a time slot to collect their packs from the VAC offices in Halifax.

Building on lessons learned from previous years, VAC found that storing and transporting the contents of the packs was more efficient when kept in boxes. As a result, most organisations collected their packs in bulk format and assembled them themselves. When placing their requests, organisations had the option to receive pre-packed packs or ask for volunteer assistance for packing, which was available through the booking form. Additionally, in response to previous feedback, discussions around the key winter messages took place when groups collected their merchandise. VAC reception staff were prepared to facilitate these conversations, ensuring that organisations had a clear understanding of the campaign's purpose. This also opened the opportunity to capture a picture of each group collecting.

A list of the groups and organisations that distributed Winter Care Packs and the communities they support is included at Appendix 18



Feedback

VCSE organisations receiving Winter Care Packs complete and return a feedback form which supports VAC and the NHS locally to continually improve the process, understand how the care packs are received and gather insight to inform future programmes.

The feedback indicates that this year's care packs reached a broader geographical spread of communities across Calderdale than ever before, with several groups participating in the initiative for the first time.

The majority of respondents completing the feedback form reported that they understood the importance of sharing the key messages and felt confident in raising awareness of the range of local health services available and the different ways to access them. People were also confident that recipients of the Winter Care Packs understood the key messages being communicated. Overall, organisations distributing the packs felt that the initiative created valuable opportunities to start conversations about these important health messages, and that, after receiving a pack and the accompanying information, people were more likely to engage with the services available to them.

People expressed overwhelmingly positive reflections on their experience with the winter care pack initiative, frequently describing it as valuable, impactful, and much-needed within the community. Many thanked the organisers for the opportunity to participate and emphasised how meaningful even small, practical items were to recipients. Others highlighted ongoing challenges—such as the difficulty in reassuring those most in need to accept help, or the lack of awareness among vulnerable groups—and stressed the value of clear communication, especially around why patients are referred to pharmacists instead of GPs. Many distributors commented on the emotional and practical difference the packs made during winter and expressed enthusiasm for being involved again in future initiatives. Overall, the feedback underscored both the positive impact of the scheme and the opportunity to continue building trust, awareness, and support across the community.

Respondents rated the importance of the Winter Care Packs to people receiving them as 3.67 (scale: 1 being no impact to 4 being significant) and based on their experience they rated the overall impact of the initiative as 3.52 (scale: 1 being no impact to 4 being significant).

Full feedback results are included in Appendix 19.

The VCSE Directory

Introduction

The Directory has been developed as a resource that can be used throughout the year. It is designed to help Calderdale residents access information about local VCSE organisations, bringing together a wide range of services, support and activities available across the borough. The Directory also acts as an easy-to-use reference tool for the NHS, VCSE organisations and wider partners, supporting local signposting and increasing awareness of what is available. It is a valuable way for VCSE organisations to showcase the services they deliver, promote what's on offer across Calderdale, and highlight the wide range of groups, activities and support available to local communities.

Contents

VAC worked with partners to determine and agree the contents of the directory. The opportunity to include information was communicated to Calderdale Communications, Involvement, Equality and Experience Collaborative and the VCSE sector. VAC collated the submissions, and the directory included:

- Key Winter Messages.
- Health and Wellbeing Messages.
- Details of 95 services categorised to Specialist Support, Social Groups, Cost of Living, Food Support, Physical Health, Mental Health and Arts & Culture.

Distribution

A total of 4,500 VCSE Directories were distributed as part of the Winter Pressures Programme. They went out in all of the Winter Care Packs, with a further 500 copies shared through organisations supporting the winter messaging campaign.

Following last year's learning, we introduced an online request form, which enabled us to distribute an additional 1,000 directories to GP practices, local services, VCSE organisations, and individuals across Calderdale. The directory is also available digitally via the VAC website, allowing people to access, view and download it all year round. VAC Website [Directory 2026 – CVAC](#)



Programme Development- Learning and Recommendations

The ongoing learning and development of the Winter Pressures Programme is fundamental to its success. Each year, feedback and insight are gathered from the VCSE organisations taking part, as well as from the communities who engage with it, ensuring that the programme continually evolves in response to real experiences and emerging needs. Alongside this, the VAC team play a central role in identifying opportunities for improvement. Together, this combination of feedback, practical learning and professional insight means that developments are made each year to strengthen the programme, enhance its impact and ensure it remains responsive, relevant and effective for Calderdale's diverse communities, supporting to reduce the pressure on urgent and emergency care services.

Planning			
Development/Learning	Recommendation	Responsibility	Initiative
Meeting focus for 25/26 data led and agreed in partnership with Calderdale Care Partnership	Adopt this approach going forward to ensure that the messaging contributes to the UECB key priorities.	VAC Calderdale Cares Partnership	Winter Messaging
Key messaging printed alongside partner logos on the Winter Care Pack bags for greater visibility, understanding of what the purpose of the packs were, where they had come from and who had funded them.	Continue with this approach, changing the key message each year as appropriate.	VAC	Winter Care Pack
VAC reviewed the VCSE Directory and made changes to improve usability. The 2026 directory was streamlined to 62 pages, ensuring it remains clear, accessible and easy to navigate while still including relevant information.	Maintain a streamlined, user-friendly format to ensure the directory remains easy to use and relevant.	VAC	VCSE Directory 2026

<p>The process for collecting information via the online form, alongside the current format and style of the directory, has worked well and supports consistency. The layout ensures information is clearly presented and easy to read.</p>	<p>Continue with the existing process for promoting, collecting, and categorising directory information, ensuring consistency and readability in future editions.</p>	<p>VAC</p>	<p>VCSE Directory 2026</p>
<p>Following last year's learning, VAC introduced an online ordering form which streamlined the process and allowed us to have better oversight on the distribution.</p>	<p>Review form annually as part of programme planning to ensure it continues to meet requirements and update as needed.</p>	<p>VAC</p>	<p>VCSE Directory 2026</p>
<p>Building on the approach introduced in the previous edition, the VCSE Directory continues to be developed as an all-year-round resource, rather than a winter-specific directory. This has strengthened its value as a consistent reference tool for communities, partners and health colleagues beyond the winter period</p>	<p>Continue producing the VCSE Directory as an annual, year-round resource to support ongoing signposting and access to VCSE support throughout the year.</p>	<p>VAC</p>	<p>VCSE Directory 2026</p>
<p>To increase knowledge of the programme, building on the success of last year's Winter video, the Community Journalist further supported capturing the impact of the programme through an article and attending community groups to capture footage</p>	<p>Continue with this approach, changing the key areas of focus each year as appropriate.</p>	<p>VAC</p>	<p>Winter Messaging Winter Care Packs</p>

Delivery			
Development/Learning	Recommendation	Responsibility	Initiative
The creation of online request and collections forms not only streamlined the process but enabled a greater level of data collection on the reach of the care packs.	Review form as part of programme planning to ensure it continues to meet requirements and update as needed.	VAC	Winter Care Packs
Volunteer support was increased in 25/26 to support care pack fulfilment. As part of our B2P Connect Project , which supports VCSE organisations by connecting them with local businesses. Groups feedback that leaflets in packs on collection supports their own packing, and VAC was able to offer groups volunteer support with packing at the groups premises. Using the corporate volunteers to help sort the merchandise into bulk orders enabled us to get all orders out within 2 weeks, compared to last year, the previous 6 weeks.	Continue to encourage volunteer support of the programme to aid packing and distribution process for VAC and groups. Encourage further involvement from local business which is mutually beneficial; supporting their corporate social responsibility goals and the winter pressures programme. Following feedback from volunteers, VAC to create itineraries for volunteers to ensure the best use of them. Logistically, having a couple of days with larger groups worked better than lots of small groups like we did last year.	VAC	Winter Care Pack
Translated leaflet needs were communicated as part of the care pack request process to ensure	Translated materials were not only ready when needed but this approach resulted in	VAC	Winter Care Pack

the materials were available at the time of care pack distribution.	leaflets only being translated into the community languages that were needed and printed at the numbers requested. This information should continue to be captured at point of request.		
To increase the dissemination and reach of the key messages VAC staff briefed groups collecting.	This development aided groups understanding of the purpose of the care packs and reinforced the links between all the elements of the Winter Pressures Programme and should continue going forward.	VAC	Winter Care Pack
Following the success of 24/25 Winter messaging Colleagues from NHS partners supported Winter Messaging, enabling communities to speak to and seek advice and information directly from 'key messaging' services. Working closely with the NHS digital team was new to this year's programme.	A number of groups took up the offer of this support, and if capacity allows this offer should once again be offered in programme delivery going forward. Who is asked to support would be dependent on the key messages identified and agreed for the 26/27 Programme	VAC Colleagues in the NHS locally	Winter Messaging
Feedback from the care packs indicated that VCSE groups would consistently welcome more time to plan and raise awareness of the winter care pack initiative. However, the lead-in period for the Winter Pressures programme is dependent	VAC will issue a communication to the VCSE sector as soon as funding is confirmed to raise awareness that the care packs will be available that year.	VAC	Winter Care Packs

on when funding is confirmed to VAC.			
People who are not directly engaged with VSCE groups and services are not always aware of the care packs and how to get one.	To get an earlier Community Journalist story in the Courier on confirmation of funding. Ongoing - communicate names of VCSE organisations taking part (with their consent)	VAC	Winter Care Packs

Feedback			
Development/Learning	Recommendation	Responsibility	Initiative
Following the 24/25 recommendation to repeat, keep the ask of groups simple with a clear and easy to use comms toolkit, which has resulted in greater engagement and visibility across various platforms.	The 'ask' of groups in 25/26, it should be repeated to support messaging and promotion of the impact and reach of the Winter Pressures Programme.	VAC	Winter Care Packs
Feedback forms were reviewed and updated, and an online version was created. The forms were straightforward to complete and developed to gather feedback and insight from groups about the process and the delivery and understanding of the key messages.	VAC to review this form each year to ensure it continues to meet need - gathering useful feedback and insight, to inform programme development, it's impact and future messaging campaigns.	VAC	Winter Messaging Winter Care Packs
Winter Care Pack contents were informed by feedback from 25/26	Review feedback from 25/26 when planning 26/27.	VAC	Winter Care Packs
Feedback highlighted that ongoing communications around the use of local community pharmacies is	Promote local community pharmacies 'year-round' and	Calderdale Cares Partnership	Winter Messaging

needed – to reduce confusion and help people understand when to seek support from pharmacists or other services.

collaborate with local NHS partners – for example, GP reception teams.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Key Messaging Materials

Don't Wait
For minor health concerns to get worse
Think pharmacy First
and get seen by your local
Pharmacy Team

Conditions they can offer prescription medicine for are:

- Impetigo (aged 1 year and over)
- Infected insect bites (aged 1 year and over)
- Earache (aged 1 to 17 years)
- Sore throat (aged 5 years and over)
- Sinusitis (aged 12 years and over)
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) (women aged 16 to 64 years)
- Shingles (aged 18 years and over)

Most pharmacies in Calderdale can also offer prescription medicine for some conditions, without you needing to see a GP or make an appointment.

TOGETHER WE CAN
choose well

Advice

Pharmacists can offer advice on a range of illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, ear infections and aches and pains. They can also give advice about medicines.

Treatment from a pharmacist

Pharmacists can suggest treatments that do not need a prescription for a range of conditions. Most local pharmacies can also offer prescription medicine (for the conditions listed overleaf), without you needing to see a GP or make an appointment.

Help with new medicines

If you're prescribed a medicine to treat a long-term condition for the first time, you may be able to get help and advice about your medicine from a local pharmacist

Get a free blood pressure check

Some pharmacies offer a free blood pressure check.

How pharmacies can help

Ask your local pharmacy team to find out what services they offer.

Disposing of old medicines

If your medicine is out of date or unwanted, take it to your local pharmacy to be disposed of safely.

Getting the contraceptive pill without a prescription

Some pharmacies may offer the contraceptive pill for free without a prescription. If you are aged 18 years or older, you can also buy the progesterone-only pill from most pharmacies.

Emergency contraception

Some pharmacies offer the emergency contraceptive pill for free. If you're aged 16 or over, you can also buy it from most pharmacies.

More services

Other services that may be available at a local pharmacy include:

- ★ Advice from a pharmacist after contacting NHS 111 or a GP
- ★ Chlamydia screening and treatment
- ★ Advice and help on how to stop smoking
- ★ Cholesterol and blood sugar testing
- ★ The substance misuse service, including needle and syringe exchange schemes
- ★ Advice and help on how to manage your weight

If you are not within these age ranges, a pharmacist can still offer advice and support decisions about self-care treatment with over-the-counter medicines, but you may need to see a GP for treatment.

Image - Together We Can NHS Pharmacy flyer with information about what help they can receive from their local pharmacy

TOGETHER WE CAN 

Stay well


and get the right help when you need it






Seasonal health advice to help you keep well, whatever the weather. Knowing where to get the right care can save you time and help our NHS. 


For self-care tips and more information on local services visit togetherwe-can.com or scan the QR code.

West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership 

 **Pharmacy First**
Go to your local pharmacy for medical advice and treatments for things like colds, tummy troubles, rashes and pains. Your pharmacist can now provide treatment, or some prescription medicine if needed, for seven conditions, without you seeing a GP. For more information visit togetherwe-can.com/pharmacies.

 **Vaccinations**
It's important to get your flu, RSV and COVID-19 vaccines if you're at higher risk of getting seriously ill from these illnesses. Find out more at nhs.uk/seasonalvaccinations.

 **Online services**
Book appointments or order repeat prescriptions through the NHS app or your GP practice website. Visit 111.nhs.uk to check your symptoms and get urgent medical help 24/7.
 Call **111** for children aged 5 and under.

 **GP practices**
Are here to help and may include doctors, nurses, social prescribers and physiotherapists. We'll make sure you get the right care for your needs.


 **Mental health**
Looking after our mental health and wellbeing is important. Visit togetherwe-can.com/mental-health for more information. For urgent help in a mental health crisis call NHS 111, option 2 for 24 hour support.

Image – Together We Can ‘Stay well and get the right help when you need it’ NHS flyer

Can everyone use all of these services?

Not yet. The services you can access will vary depending on the services offered by your GP practice.

To use some services, you will need to verify your identity. You only need to do this once. You can learn more about how to register and verify your identity in a separate leaflet: 'Getting started with the NHS App'.

Or you can get help on our website: nhs.uk/nhs-app

Your data and permissions

The NHS App does not store any patient data. It lets you view your health information held by your GP and other healthcare professionals.

Help and support

If you have any problems with the NHS App, you can:

- select the 'Help' question mark in the app to get help related to the screen you are on
- visit nhs.uk/nhs-app or scan here



To download the NHS App, scan here



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What is the NHS App?

The NHS App is owned and run by the NHS. It can be accessed by anyone aged 13 and over registered with an NHS GP surgery in England or Isle of Man.

Once you have verified your identity in the app, you will have easy, 24/7 access to a growing range of health services and information.

It doesn't replace existing services. You can still contact your GP surgery in the usual ways.

How you can use the NHS App

Access services

- **request repeat prescriptions**
request prescriptions without having to contact your GP surgery, and choose where you want to collect them
- **check for GP surgery appointments**
find and book appointments without having to call your surgery
- **contact your GP surgery**
request care or information from your GP surgery using an online form
- **use 111 online**
check if you need urgent medical help
- **browse NHS health information**
use our health A to Z to read about symptoms and treatments
- **browse NHS medical information**
use our medicines A to Z to read about side effects and other common questions
- **find NHS services**
look for services near you

Manage your health

- **view your GP health record**
view your medical history, test results, allergies, medicines and documents
- **manage appointments**
check and change appointments at your GP surgery and hospital, including hospital referrals and waiting list information
- **manage prescriptions**
check the status of your prescription requests and view confirmed prescriptions
- **make your health choices**
register your organ donation decision, choose if your health data can be shared for research purposes, and decide about taking part in health studies
- **view care plans**
depending on your GP surgery, you may be able to view and manage plans about how would you like your healthcare team to look after you

Account and settings

- **manage your account**
update your login and contact information
- **change settings**
change your app settings, including whether you get notifications about new messages

Read and send messages

- **receive messages and notifications**
view messages from your GP surgery and get notifications through your phone or tablet
- **send and reply to messages**
you may be able to send or reply to some messages

Help someone else

- **switch profiles**
access the health records, appointments and prescriptions of people you care for, including children

You can also use these services by logging in through the NHS website

Image – 'Do more with the NHS App!' NHS flyer



Image- Together We Can Roller Banner

Appendix 2- Winter Messaging briefing



Why Winter Messaging?

Winter can be challenging for the NHS, especially for urgent and emergency services.

The NHS locally continue to encourage people to 'choose well' especially as health and care services continue to be under enormous pressure.

If people do become unwell and have a medical problem, it is important they get the care that is most appropriate for their needs.

Focus for 2025/26

Increased community awareness and use of healthcare options and in turn demand away from GP practices and A&E for minor health concerns.

- NHS App
- Together We Can - 'Stay well'
- Pharmacy First

Aims & Objectives

To support our diverse Calderdale communities, to access the right advice and services this winter to support them to stay well and make sure they are getting the right help at the right time.

Our main aims are:

- NHS App –** Recruit and train NHS App Community Ambassadors in Calderdale. Increase sign-ups, raise awareness of functions and encourage regular use to manage care.
- Community Pharmacies -** Build on the success of last years targeted messaging to raise awareness amongst all our Calderdale communities of the advice and services offered by this essential local service.
- Together We Can -** Continue to support West Yorkshire's long-term campaign to minimise pressures on urgent and emergency services.

NHS App

A key focus of the NHS 10 Year Plan – By 2028 the NHS App is planned to be "a full front door to the entire NHS" where patients will have "a doctor in their pocket".

In Calderdale we want to both support people to download the App but also raise awareness of functions and encourage regular use.

On the NHS App people can:

- Order repeat prescriptions and nominate a pharmacy where they would like to collect them.
- View their GP health record and access test results.
- Turn on their notifications to receive messages about their care
- Access health service on behalf of someone they care for
- Signpost people in the right direction when their practice is closed

NHS App Community Ambassadors

This years messaging is asking our Engagement Champions and VCSE sector organisations to become **NHS App Community Ambassadors** in Calderdale

Community Ambassadors will play a crucial role by assisting people in discovering the app, demonstrating how to use it, and supporting those who may find digital tools challenging.

They will champion the app among their communities highlighting its benefits and helping users understand its features.

Becoming an NHS App ambassador is an opportunity to:

- Empower Patients:** Help patients manage their health more effectively and save time with the NHS App.
- Educate the Community:** Spread awareness about the NHS App's features and benefits, making it easier for everyone to access NHS services.
- Support New Technologies:** Assist those who may find digital tools challenging, ensuring everyone can benefit from the NHS App.
- Professional Development:** Gain valuable experience and skills while contributing to better patient care and community health.

NHS App Community Ambassadors

By becoming an NHS App ambassador, you can play a crucial role in transforming how your communities engage with the NHS and access their medical records, making healthcare more convenient and accessible.

Training Session:
1 hour - Online via Zoom
10am - Thursday 20th November

You will also receive support materials, such as posters and written copy, to promote the NHS App and engage with your communities.

"It's easy to use and I can do a variety of things such as check some of my medical records, order my repeat prescription and make appointments when the service is available. I can also receive notifications and messages from the NHS and my GP."
Christine

Together We Can

The 'Together We Can' campaign will run once again across West Yorkshire this winter.

The campaign helps people access health and care services at the right time and place.

It also encourages people to choose well and to opt for convenient self-care, where safe to do so during the winter months.

Together we can choose well this winter. Together we can make a real difference.
www.togetherwe-can.com

Community Pharmacies

Don't wait for minor health concerns to get worse ... **Think pharmacy first**

- Attendances at A & E for minor health concerns puts pressure on services and contributes to increased waiting times for all patients.
- Many of these minor health concerns are suitable for community pharmacy treatment.
- Build on the success of last years targeted messaging to raise awareness amongst all our Calderdale communities of the advice and services offered by this essential local service.



Target Groups



Building on the success of last year's targeted messaging, this year we want to widen those fantastic, innovative and creative engagement methods to raise awareness and reach all our Calderdale communities.

Support from the VCSE

Locally, the NHS know that these important health messages do not always reach our communities successfully.

Our Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) organisations have demonstrated over the past 5 years of the Winter Pressure Programme that they can play a vital role in ensuring our communities have access to the right information this winter and in turn demand away from GP practices and A&E for minor health concerns.

As a member of the VCSE in Calderdale:

- You understand the local area and populations
- Have strong community networks
- Are able to engage with your communities



The ask



We are looking for Engagement Champions and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector organisations to become NHS App Community Ambassadors and to come up with innovative ways of engaging with individuals and/or groups with the aim of increasing their knowledge, promoting good health and encouraging correct use of NHS services.

A range of materials in different formats and talking points will be made available to help you do this.

To get you thinking...



In 2024/25 engagement methods included family fun days, attendance at youth groups and family sessions and the use of social media broadcasting media. Last year the program saw the first use of TikTok and podcasts.

We know that you will have lots of experience, knowledge and ideas about the most appropriate and effective methods and activities to engage with your communities around these key messages.



Printed and digital materials will be available to you along with some supporting merchandise.

Timescales and how to get involved

We would like the work to take place during November 2025 and February 2026.

We will need you to **reply to the expression of interest email** to:

- confirm that you would like to undertake the NHS App Community Ambassador training
- tell us about the engagement method(s) you are going to use
- the target group it is aimed at and which local area
- the number of people this is likely to reach.

You will receive payment for each initiative (including attending the NHS App Community Ambassador training.)

In view of the open brief, payment will be agreed according to engagement methods suggested.



TOGETHER
WE CAN

Roots of Health



CALDERDALE CARES
PARTNERSHIP

NHS
NHS West Yorkshire
Integrated Care Board

We look forward to hearing how you can support Winter Messaging 2025-2026.

An email will be sent out to you after the briefing with all the information you need about how to get involved.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch for further conversations:

- Tamsin Woodhead – Quality & Engagement Lead, VAC
- Jess Robinson - Link Officer, Quality & Engagement, VAC

Appendix 3- NHS App Community Ambassador Training Session

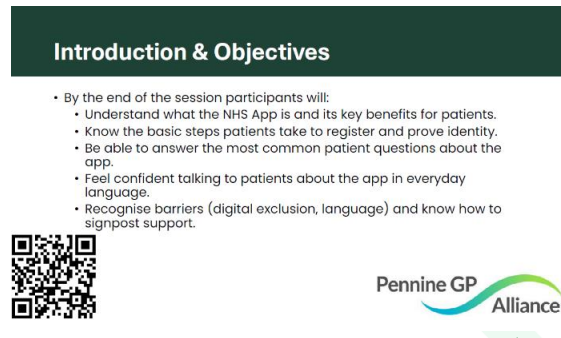


Get started with the NHS App here

NHS App Training Session


Helping volunteers support patients to make the most of the NHS App
Matt Davies – Digital Transformation Lead


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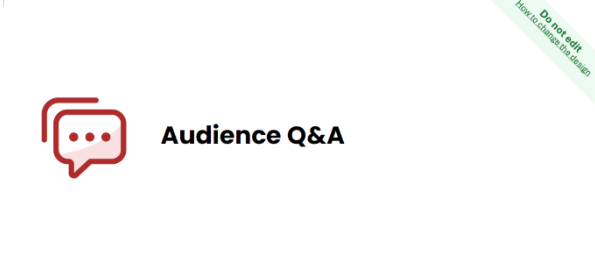
Introduction & Objectives


- By the end of the session participants will:
 - Understand what the NHS App is and its key benefits for patients.
 - Know the basic steps patients take to register and prove identity.
 - Be able to answer the most common patient questions about the app.
 - Feel confident talking to patients about the app in everyday language.
 - Recognise barriers (digital exclusion, language) and know how to signpost support.



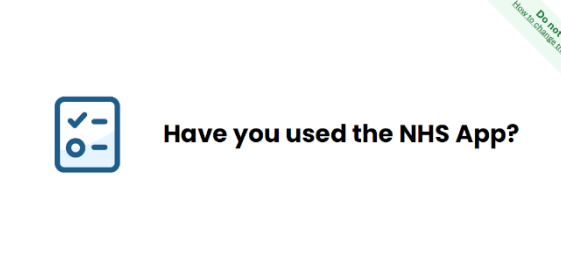



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 **Audience Q&A**


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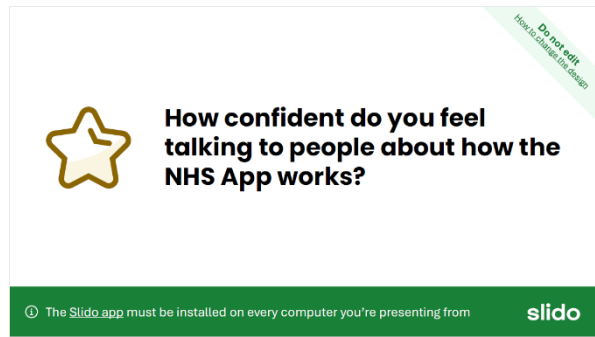



 **Have you used the NHS App?**

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 The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from **slido**

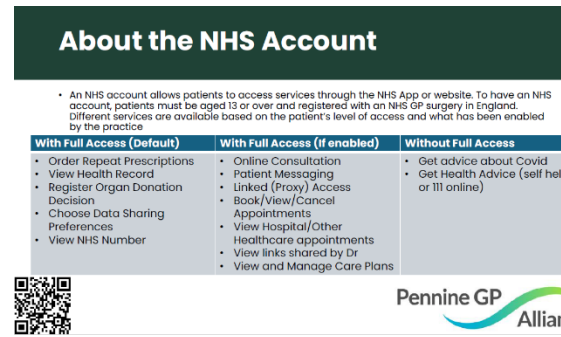
 The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from **slido**



 **How confident do you feel talking to people about how the NHS App works?**

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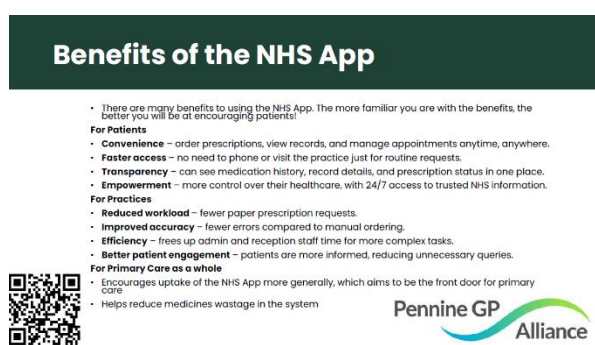
About the NHS Account

An NHS account allows patients to access services through the NHS App or website. To have an NHS account, patients must be aged 13 or over and registered with an NHS GP surgery in England. Different services are available based on the patient's level of access and what has been enabled by the practice.

With Full Access (Default)	With Full Access (if enabled)	Without Full Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order Repeat Prescriptions View Health Record Register Organ Donation Decision Choose Data Sharing Preferences View NHS Number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online Consultation Patient Messaging Linked (Proxy) Access Book/View/Cancel Appointments View Hospital/Other Healthcare appointments View links shared by Dr View and Manage Care Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get advice about Covid Get Health Advice (self help or 111 online)







Benefits of the NHS App

- There are many benefits to using the NHS App. The more familiar you are with the benefits, the better you will be at encouraging patients!

For Patients


- Convenience** – order prescriptions, view records, and manage appointments anytime, anywhere.
- Faster access** – no need to phone or visit the practice just for routine requests.
- Transparency** – can see medication history, record details, and prescription status in one place.
- Empowerment** – more control over their healthcare, with 24/7 access to trusted NHS information.


For Practices

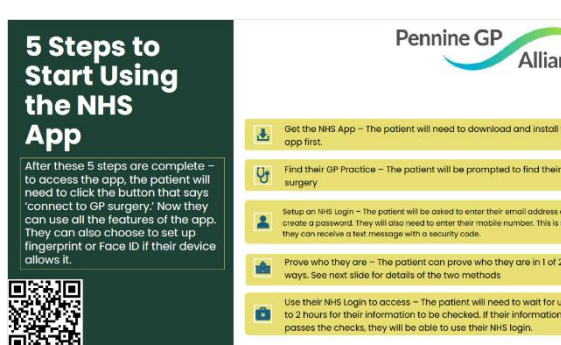
- Reduced workload** – fewer paper prescription requests.
- Improved accuracy** – fewer errors compared to manual ordering.
- Efficiency** – frees up admin and reception staff time for more complex tasks.
- Better patient engagement** – patients are more informed, reducing unnecessary queries.

For Primary Care as a whole

- Encourages uptake of the NHS App more generally, which aims to be the front door for primary care.
- Helps reduce medicines wastage in the system














5 Steps to Start Using the NHS App

After these 5 steps are complete – to access the app, the patient will need to click the button that says 'connect to GP surgery'. Now they can use all the features of the app. They can also choose to set up fingerprint or Face ID if their device allows it.





-  **Get the NHS App** – The patient will need to download and install the app first.
-  **Find their GP Practice** – The patient will be prompted to find their surgery.
-  **Setup an NHS Login** – The patient will be asked to enter their email address and create a password. They will also need to enter their mobile number. This is so they can receive a text message with a security code.
-  **Prove who they are** – The patient can prove who they are in 1 of 2 ways. See next slide for details of the two methods.
-  **Use their NHS Login to access** – The patient will need to wait for up to 2 hours for their information to be checked. If their information passes the checks, they will be able to use their NHS login.

How patients prove identity to access the app

The patient can prove who they are in 1 of 2 ways



Send a photo of their ID:

Send a photo of their ID (UK/EU driving license or passport or European national ID card). They will also need to record a video of their face while they say the 4 random numbers shown to them. They may be asked to scan their face instead. They can do all this with their phone's camera, without leaving the app. They do not need their NHS number, but it helps connect them to their NHS record if they do have it.



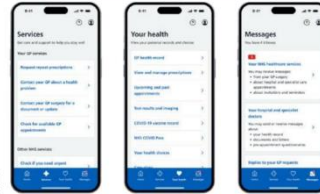
Use registration details for GP online services

The name of these registration details is different for different practices. The patient might ask you to give them these details:

- Linkage key (also known as a 'Passphrase')
- ODS Code (organisation code or practice ID)
- Account ID



NHS App Look & Feel



Services
 Renew prescriptions
 Contact your GP (online consultation form)
 GP appointments
 111 Online
 Find NHS services near you
 And more...

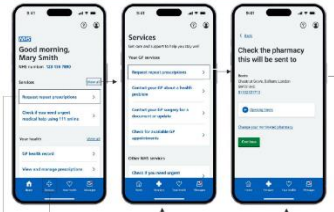
Your health
 GP health record
 Prescriptions
 Appointments
 Test results
 COVID-19 vaccine record
 And more...



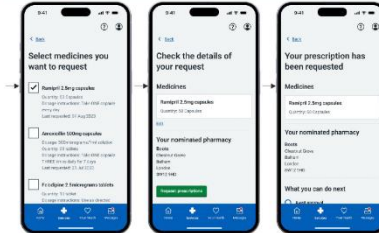
Ordering Repeat Prescriptions Process 1



- Before requesting repeat prescriptions, the patient will need to select a pharmacy. After selecting a pharmacy, the patient will be able to order their repeat prescriptions. The nominated pharmacy can be changed at anytime



Ordering Repeat Prescriptions Process 2



Understanding Linked Profiles and Proxy Access



What is proxy access?

- Allows one person (e.g. parent, carer) to manage health services on behalf of someone else through the NHS App.
- Commonly used for children, elderly relatives, or those needing support.

Who can have proxy access?

- **Children under 11** – parents/carers usually granted full proxy access.
- **Ages 11-12** – proxy access may continue, depending on the cut-off age set by their practice.
- **Ages 13-15** – young people may be assessed for **Gillick competency** (ability to make their own decisions). Proxy access may be limited or withdrawn if they are deemed competent.
- **Age 16+** – patients are expected to manage their own NHS App account unless they give explicit consent for proxy access.

How do patients request it?

- Proxy access must be set up by the GP practice.
- Patients or carers need to contact the practice directly.
- ID checks and consent processes are required.

Key points for volunteers to share:

- Proxy access is not something volunteers can set up.
- Encourage patients to speak to their GP practice if they want proxy access.
- Reassure parents/carers that practices follow national guidance to balance safety, privacy, and support.



Talking to Patients About the NHS App



- Use simple, everyday language
- Focus on benefits: the app is more convenient, it is the most nationally trusted health application, they can access it at any time of day.
- Share personal examples – “I use it for my repeat prescriptions”
- Encourage patients to try it but reiterate that it is not compulsory for people to have, so don't pressure.



FAQs



- **Is the NHS App safe to use?** Yes, it is secure and run by the NHS, it requires ID verification to register and two-factor authentication to login, patient data is safe, getting the NHS App does not change where it is stored in any way, and it is only accessible to you.
- **Do I need my NHS number to register?** No, you just need email, mobile number and ID
- **What can I do with the NHS App?** You can order prescriptions, view your full health record and manage your appointments
- **Can I book appointments with the app?** It depends on whether your practice allows it, currently in Calderdale, most practice don't allow appointment booking via the NHS App.
- **Sorry I don't have a smartphone, so I can't use the app. This isn't true, you can access all the same stuff via the NHS website if you want to, which can be accessed via a computer.**
- **Can I order medication for my child?** Yes, through proxy access, you will need to request this through your GP practice.
- **I've just moved GP practice, can I still see everything on the app?** You can continue using the NHS App after moving practice, you will just need to reconnect the app to your new GP surgery.



Overcoming barriers



Digital Exclusion

- Some patients may lack internet, a smartphone, or digital skills.
- Suggest using the NHS website (at home or library).
- Remind: calling or visiting the practice is always an option.

Language

- The NHS App is only in English.
- Patients can use the NHS website with Google/Microsoft Translate (though not always perfect).
- Practices may offer interpretation services - reassure patients they can still access care.



Role-Play exercise Questions:

1. "I've heard about the NHS App, but I don't really know what it does. I'm not very good with technology, and I don't have a smartphone. Is it worth me trying?"
2. "Is it safe? I don't want my information shared."
3. "I don't speak much English. Can I still use it?"
4. "I've downloaded the NHS App, but I don't know how to register. What do I need to do?"
5. "Can I use the NHS App to order prescriptions for my child?"



Role-Play exercise Responses (1):

1. "The NHS App helps patients order prescriptions, view their records, and manage appointments. If you don't have a smartphone, you can still use the NHS website on a computer. Some people even use library computers with help from staff. And remember, you can always phone or visit your GP practice - the app is just another option, not the only way."
2. "Yes, it's secure. The NHS App uses NHS login with ID checks and two-factor authentication. Only you, or someone you've given proxy access to, can see your information."
3. "The app itself is only in English, but you can use the NHS website with Google Translate or Microsoft Translate to view pages in your language. Translations aren't perfect, so for anything important you can still speak to your GP practice, where interpretation services may be available."



Role-Play exercise Responses (2):

4. "You'll need to set up an NHS login with your email address and a password.
 - You'll also need your mobile number to receive a security code.
 - To prove who you are, you can either:
 - Upload photo ID (passport, driving licence, national ID) and record a short video, or
 - Use registration details from your GP practice (Linkage key, ODS code, Account ID).
 - Once verified, you can connect the app to your GP surgery and start using it."
5. "Yes, but this requires proxy access.
 - Proxy access means a parent or carer can manage health services for someone else. It must be set up by the GP practice - volunteers cannot do this.

Age rules:

 - Under 11: parents usually have full proxy access.
 - 11-12: practices review what's appropriate.
 - 13-16: young people may be assessed for Gillick competency (ability to make their own decisions).
 - 16+: patients are expected to manage their own account unless they give consent.

Advise the parent to contact their GP practice to request proxy access."



What you as volunteers can't do



Issue	Who deals with it
Provide the patient's account ID, passphrase and practice ODS code	Registered GP practice
Give patient proxy access to manage health for others	Registered GP practice
Amend what patients have access to in their app	Registered GP Practice
Reset NHS account	Registered GP practice
Verify patient identity	NHS App team
Access patient health record	Registered GP practice
Deal with technical issues	NHS App team



What you as volunteers can and should do



- Explain everything the NHS App offers, and explain the benefits of it in simple language
- Show them how to download it and register
- Share how to prove their identity (more generally)
- Signpost patients to their GP practice if needed, or online NHS App help resources
- Encourage patients to try the app, without pressuring them.



Audience Q&A

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How to change the session

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Thank you!

Links to resources:

- [NHS App Roadmap - NHS England Digital](#)
- [NHS App general promotional materials - NHS England Digital](#)
- [FAQs videos - YouTube](#)
- <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/nhs-app-help-and-support>
- [Contact the NHS App team](#)

Appendix 4- A.C.E (Advancement of Community Empowerment CIC)

Start Date: 22nd November 2025. End Date: 27th February 2026.



Day/date.	When	Numbers	Background	Specialist Attendee	Comments
1. Saturday. 22 nd November 2025	11am to 1pm. Madni Masjid Boys Group. Gibbet St, Halifax	55	Children & Young People.	None	Good attendance. Also gave out information, advice and guidance on long term health conditions, with referrals to local pharmacies for progress. Handed out NHS Bags.
2. Sunday 23rd November 2025	Madni Mosque Boys Group 2. 11am to 1pm	45	South Asian males aged 13 to 21.	None	Good session, good q&a around diabetes and Asthma, use of 111. Handed out NHS bags.
3. Saturday 29 th November 2025.	Madni Girls Group1. 2pm to 3pm	20	South Asian females, aged 11 to 25	None	Good turnout. Good q&a around how to book appts, online services. Handed out NHS bags.

4. Sunday 30 th November 2025	Madni Girls Group 2. 2pm to 3pm	25	Children & Young People/ Parents aged 11 to 25.	None	Good attendance. Also gave out information, advice and guidance on long term health conditions, with referrals to local pharmacies for progress. NHS bags handed out.
5. Saturday 6th December 2025	Outback group 1. 1pm to 4pm	27	Mixed group, male/femal e, adult/young people/asyl um seekers & refugees	Dr Steven Cleasby, local GP	Good turnout. Good q&a on local NHS services, multilingual support. Handed out NHS bags.
6. Saturday 13 th December 2025.	Outback group 2. 1pm to 4pm	19	Mixed group, male/femal e, adult/young people/asyl um seekers & refugees	Dr Steven Cleasby. Local GP. Local Pharmacis t Aska from Spring Hall Group of GP practices.	Good turnout. Good q&a on local NHS services, multilingual support. Also how to access Out of Hours Dental services. Handed out NHS bags.
7. 24 th November 2025 to 27 th February 2026. 14 weeks email messaging	Various days, weekly email to 75 individua ls and organisat ions in Halifax.	75	Emails to individuals and organisatio ns in Calderdale. Target focus on HX1, HX2, HX3 & HX6 post codes.	None	Received a number of emails for further information. Emailed service provider booklet.
8. 24 th November 2025 to 27 th February 2026.	Various days, weekly to 155 individua ls and organisat ions	155	Social media messages to individuals and organisatio ns in Calderdale.	None	Received a number of messages for further information. Emailed service provider booklet.

	across Calderdale		Target focus on HX1, HX2, HX3 & HX6 postcodes.		
9. 19 th January 2026.	Left service provider booklets at ASDA, Halifax	70+ every week	All socio-economic groups across Calderdale.	ACECIC Media team.	Left Winter Messaging Directory at Halifax store.
10. Monitoring & reporting.	Sent weekly photos and screenshots of events and activities to VAC.	Weekly	All socio-economic groups.	ACECIC Media team.	Sent weekly to Jess Robinson at VAC

Appendix 5- Focus 4 Hope

Throughout the winter period, our team worked with target groups to promote key winter health messages and support individuals in accessing appropriate NHS services. Staff and volunteers felt confident in educating priority groups on practical actions they can take to stay healthy during winter through promoting Pharmacy First and Together We Can as well as promoting the NHS App, explaining its functions, and encourage regular use for managing appointments, prescriptions, and personal health information.

We used opening questions such as the ones below to get conversations started and to get an idea of the support we could offer:

- *Have you signed up to the NHS App after receiving support?*
- *If yes, has the NHS App made it easier to manage appointments or prescriptions?*
- *Did the winter information help you feel more prepared for the colder months?*
- *Do you feel more confident knowing where to access health or energy support?*

Case Study

One example of our ongoing support involves a 93-year-old woman who recently experienced a serious fall, resulting in a broken hip and wrist. She has been in hospital for four weeks, and we remain in regular contact with her family. Plans are now in place for a period of respite care until she is well enough to return home with support from carers. She has received excellent care throughout her recovery.

We will continue to support her by ensuring she can still access our community activities, something she greatly enjoys and where she has built strong friendships. Maintaining her connection to these groups will help reduce any feelings of isolation or loneliness both during her respite stay and once she returns home.

Challenges and Learning

The main challenge we encountered was supporting older people who face barriers with digital access. However, our community hub and IT resources helped us overcome this by offering practical, patient, face-to-face guidance.

A key learning from this programme was that winter health information is far more effective when delivered in person, supported by trusted relationships, rather than through leaflets or digital communication alone. Many older service users responded positively when staff or volunteers took the time to explain NHS App features or discuss winter health advice in clear, simple, and reassuring language.

Recommendations for Future Delivery

One of our main takeaways is the importance of offering this type of support throughout the year, not only during the winter months. Regular engagement will help us better support vulnerable community members, build trust, and continue improving access to essential health information and services.

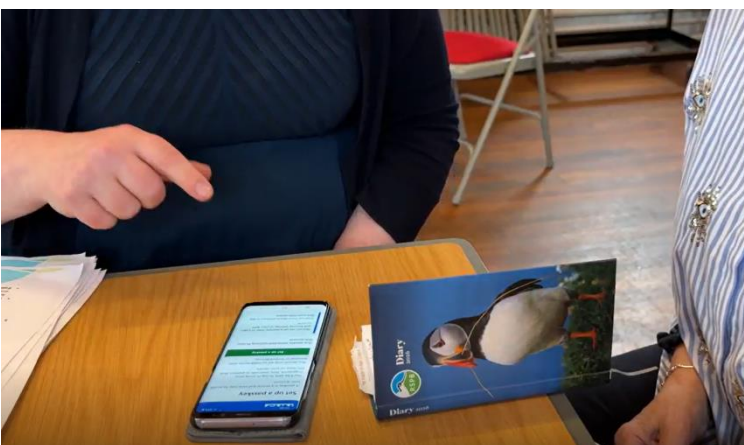


Appendix 6- Grassroots Family CIC

Throughout the winter period, Grassroots introduced and promoted NHS messaging during groups like our regular activities, such as Knit & Natter and our Community Lunches.

Introducing these topics naturally within group conversations helped to open up discussions and identify the types of support individuals might need. This often led to one-to-one conversations, where we provided personalised guidance, for example, explaining what minor health concerns pharmacies can assist with (such as UTIs) or offering hands-on help with downloading, setting up, and confidently using the NHS App.

In addition, we delivered three in-person NHS App drop-in sessions at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, New Road Family Centre, and St Peter's Community Centre. These sessions invited community members to receive support with downloading, registering, and learning about the functions of the NHS App. We were also joined by Ann from White Lee First Aid Training, who provided attendees with demonstrations of basic first aid techniques.



Put your families health in the palm of your hand!

**GRASSROOTS FAMILY CENTRE,
SOWERBY NEW ROAD
THURSDAY 26TH FEBRUARY
2:00 - 3:30**



Join us for our **FREE** health event with practical support and useful take home goodies!

- **NHS App support:** we'll help you download & set up the app so you can:
 - Order repeat prescriptions
 - Check your child's vaccinations
 - View test results
 - Manage appointments & much more!
- **Basic first aid session:** simple, essential skills for handling emergencies
- **FREE first aid kit:** PLUS other **FREE** goodies to help keep you and your family warm and well

grassroots
FAMILY CIC

Appendix 7- Healthy Living Partnership

Engagement Activity

Between November 2025 and the end of February 2026, Healthy Living Partnership actively supported the Winter Messaging Campaign through a range of engagement methods. Our work focused particularly on young people aged 14–25, recognising their ability to influence and support their parents and wider families to access and use appropriate health services. Throughout the campaign period, we shared digital posters, key information, and reminders through our WhatsApp broadcasting channels. This has continued to be a highly effective communication method as we have a lot of members, so making printed resources stretch out for the full engagement period is a challenge.

We have also been incorporating the messaging into our weekly scouts' sessions as we have found it a good way of promoting key messaging, as we have an active target audience already formed and engaged with activities that can share with their families/ neighbours and friends.

Many of our parents have a language barrier, as English is not their native language. To support meaningful engagement, we facilitated small focus groups, which created a comfortable environment for discussion, questions, and clarification. These sessions proved vital in helping parents understand and respond to the campaign messages.

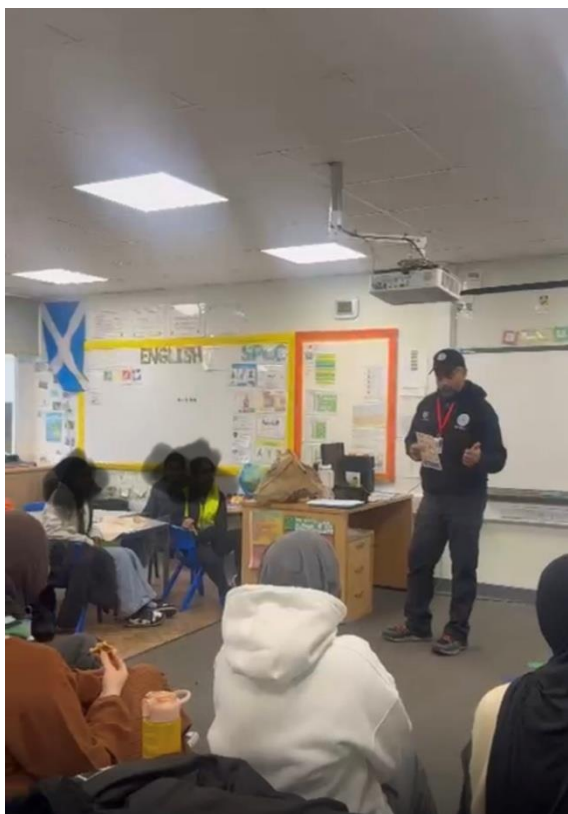
We did find that the participants in the physical activity sessions are much more receptive to messages and want to learn new information. The merchandise went down very well. We used short quizzes at the end of sessions to keep people engaged and to see whether the messages were being understood.

The NHS App as a concept is very good, and people responded well, but practically speaking, the take-up is slow, with many not feeling comfortable navigating the technology. Further sessions are planned to continue to support people in adopting the App.

The reach via the Holiday Activities and Food programme is massive and is the method by which most people are reached. We have several hundred adults engaged with the programme, and many want to listen and respond to the information given.

The messaging was delivered at Beech Hill Primary School, Community Centre, and also out in the fields and in minibuses whilst on activities. The key is to build the messaging, and it is something that needs to be done throughout the year.

In future, we need to order more leaflets and materials as running a programme over a few months requires more resources.



Appendix 8- Invictus Wellbeing

1. Overview During the winter campaign period (up to February 2026), Invictus Wellbeing delivered engagement activities aimed at promoting key NHS messages.

The focus areas included:

- NHS App uptake
- Choose Well guidance
- Awareness and use of Local Pharmacy services

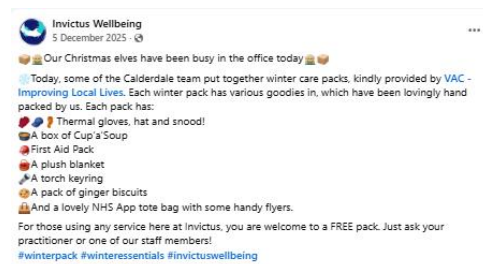
The campaign targeted individuals accessing Invictus Wellbeing services. This included a particular emphasis on engaging young people aged 16+, which includes those up to age 25. Also included were the parents/carers of clients aged 5 to 15. We also raised staff awareness.

2. Activities Delivered

A variety of engagement methods were used to reach service users effectively:

- **Social Media**
- **Community Engagement**

- Direct conversations with service users during wellbeing sessions
- Encouraging young people to download and use the NHS App
- Informal discussions around accessing appropriate NHS services
- This was carried out during and after sessions with young people and where age appropriate their families. Included in these discussions were signposting to the NHS app and other services, including the pharmacy first message, signposting to charities which provide hot food, organisations which can provide home adaptations including sausage dogs for door warmth and radiator foil reflectors for reducing heating bills.
- We also gave out the winter care packs which included the NHS app promotion on the bag itself as well as practical support inside and the leaflets and promotional materials. This helped provide something visible as a reminder for clients once they'd gone home.



- The winter campaign was promoted at several events by practitioners. These included a freshers event at Calderdale College.
- **On-Site Promotion**
 - Displays in wellbeing rooms, offices, and waiting areas and Distribution of signposting information on NHS services
 - These have been displayed on noticeboards and walls as well as a supply in each wellbeing room for practitioners to hand out.
- **Pharmacy Engagement**
 - Promotion of local pharmacy services
 - Encouraging service users to consider pharmacies as a first point of contact for minor illnesses

3. Reach and Participation

- Number of people reached: 100
- Engagement included a diverse group of service users, with a strong representation of young people aged 16+. Engagement included service users with refugee status.

4. Feedback

Feedback from service users highlighted: Clients were able to download the app
Increased awareness of when to use pharmacies instead of GP or A&E services
Clarification sought from clients on age where a young person can seek medical advice/treatment alone and without a parent.

Clients appreciated receiving a winter care pack at the same time as conversations and signposting.

A parent with children with refugee status was provided with advice and a winter care pack for each member of the family. This person said appreciated this kindness. A client said they were really grateful as they weren't expecting to attend a support session and leave with information and winter supplies. By discussing the winter campaign with some clients this opened up further conversations around keeping warm at home, services that could offer support including food and a hot meal.

Appendix 9- Light Up BAHC

Activity Delivered

We delivered a community engagement session promoting the NHS App during one of our large community gatherings. The aim was to increase awareness and support members of the Black and African heritage community to confidently access NHS digital services.

During the session, we:

- Demonstrated how the NHS App works and explained its key features such as booking GP appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions, and accessing medical records.
- Provided hands-on support to download and install the NHS App.
- Offered one-to-one guidance for those who needed help setting up the app.

Although there was no NHS facilitator present, the session was led by Bola, acting as the Engagement Champion, ensuring participants received clear guidance and culturally appropriate support.

Number of People Reached

- Over 100 people attended the event, including adults and children.
- The information was also shared online through our community platforms, extending the reach beyond the physical event.

Evidence

Photos were taken during the event to document the engagement activities. Where participants appear in photos.



Lightup Bahc
8 January · 🌐

Together we can stay healthy by choosing the right NHS service — whether it's using Pharmacy First for minor issues, booking your vaccinations, caring for your mental health, calling NHS 111 for quick advice, practising self-care, or making sure your medication is ready ahead of time. #health #nhs #medication #lightupbahc #reels

TOGETHER WE CAN STAY WELL

Don't leave
it too late

Make sure you have
enough medication to last
you through the holidays



TOGETHER WE CAN CHOOSE WELL

Feeling under
the weather?
Choose the best way to
get the advice you need



TOGETHER WE CAN

<p>Pharmacy First Medical advice and prescription for minor ailments, including pain relief, coughs, colds, sore throats, and allergies.</p>	<p>Vaccinations To protect you and your family from serious illnesses, it's important to get your routine and seasonal vaccinations.</p>	<p>Self Care Take control of your health and wellbeing with our self-care advice and products.</p>
<p>Mental health Support and advice for mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and stress.</p>	<p>GP practices For advice and treatment for a wide range of health conditions.</p>	<p>NHS 111 24/7 advice and support for a wide range of health conditions.</p>



Community Response

The session was very well received. Many participants appreciated having the opportunity to learn about the NHS App in a trusted community setting.

Some attendees downloaded the app during the session, while others said the demonstration gave them the confidence to download and use it later.

Participants who were already using the NHS App shared their experiences, which helped encourage others to start using it.

Key Feedback

Discussions with participants highlighted:

- A lack of awareness about the benefits of the NHS App.
- The importance of face-to-face support to improve digital confidence.
- The value of community-based engagement in helping people access NHS digital services.

Overall Impact

The session successfully:

- Reached over 100 community members.
- Increased awareness and understanding of the NHS App.
- Supported new downloads and improved digital confidence within the community.

Appendix 10- Mums on a Mission



During the winter messaging period from November 25 up to the end of Feb 26 Mums on a Mission delivered engagement with our local community and people accessing our services and activities around the three key areas of focus NHS App, Choose Well, Local Pharmacy.



Engagement Delivered

4 X Coffee mornings held at Halifax Unity, Queens Road. We reached a total of 28 residents within these sessions.

We did have three of our coffee mornings that were cancelled due to poor weather conditions. However, we used this time to have conversations with local residents who were passing by our centre.

2 X Women's Boxfit Sessions. We reached a total of 10 women

1 X Healthy Minds Drop-In Session at Halifax Unity. We reached a total of 3 people.

Group discussions to local church at RCCG Open Heaven, Halifax, Carlton Terrace, HX1 2AD. We reached a total of 14 women.

Group discussion at the local mosque. We reached a total of 25 women.

Target Audience

- 80 Residents in Park ward area
- BAME Community
- Roma Community
- Women
- Single Parents
- Those with language barriers
- Those with health conditions (men & women)
- Ages between 20- 60+



Feedback

The key messages for this year's winter messaging were received well. Local residents found the winter packs very useful, especially the VCSE directory, as many were unaware of many of the organisations that were available and how they could support them.

The NHS app was also received well.

Common questions such as "*what's the difference between patches and the NHS app?*"

Which we explained that patches are used directly with GP practices; however, not all GPs use this service with their patients.

Older residents expressed that they prefer to use the telephone to book appointments or speak to a medical professional as they "*don't feel digitally competent*"

Some residents were already aware of where to go and how to seek help for medical emergencies without having to go to A&E.

Delivered by Engagement Champions by: Ashleigh May, Vanessa Raimundo, Ilhan Adam.

Appendix 11- Our Place

We had a very successful series of awareness days and events, promoting the Winter Messaging campaign and handing out the winter care packs to those most in need in our community.

We shared winter campaign messaging and information on our Facebook page and through VAC social media.

Our Place Calderdale is with VAC - Improving Local Lives.
11 January · 🌐

Lovely Sunday Session now the ice has gone!!! 🥰
Sausage casserole & Trifle 🍷
Bingo, raffle & Mel quiz 🎲
Fabulous entertainment by [Melissa Harper](#)
And another winter messaging session, giving out information, winter packs and goodies to those who need them 🥰
Plus a top up of our Wellbeing Wall provision 🥰
[#TogetherWeCan #NHS111](#) go to www.togetherwe-can.com for more information on local health services
NHS.uk/app
(Kindly supported by Calderdale Council & UKSPF funding)

Our Place Calderdale
2 January · 🌐

With amber warnings in place for cold weather over the next couple of weeks, we want to remind you we are here 🥰
We have winter care packs available thanks to [VAC - Improving Local Lives #TogetherWeCan](#)
We have our Wellbeing Wall provision available to those who need it with food, personal hygiene products, teabags, coffee and winter goods such as blankets, hats & gloves
We also have three sessions a week in a safe [Warm Welcome Campaign](#) space, where people can join us for hot drinks, a 2 course meal, entertainment and activities for just £2 per session or £5 for all three days
Kindly supported by [UKSPF](#), [Community Foundation for Calderdale](#) [Asda foundation](#) and [Boothtown & Southwram Methodist Church](#)
We can offer support and signposting for benefits help, financial issues, health concerns and more through our drop in sessions and our Thursday drop ins with the [Halifax Opportunities Trust](#) support worker 🥰
The kettle is always on!

STAYING SAFE IN COLD WEATHER

GOING OUTSIDE
If driving in snowy or icy weather, ensure you take warm clothes, food, water, a torch and shovel and let someone know your route and when you expect to arrive. Wear shoes with a good grip if out walking, and wrap up warm in layers.

STAYING SAFE AND WELL
Protect yourself from flu by getting vaccinated. If eligible, you can have the flu jab free on the NHS. If bad weather is forecast, check you have enough food in, in case it's hard to get out and about. If you take prescription medication, make sure you have enough.

KEEPING SAFE AT HOME
Try not to sit still for too long - if you find it difficult to move about, stretching your arms and legs can help you keep warm. Check radiators are not obstructed by curtains or furniture, close curtains at dusk to help keep heat inside the room.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND OTHERS
Keep an eye out for vulnerable friends or neighbours who might need extra support. Keep up to date with the latest weather forecast and warnings - www.metoffice.gov.uk

Do more with the NHS App!

Warm Welcome Spaces

WE CAN

Vaccinations
It's important to get your flu, RSV and COVID-19 vaccines. Find out more at nhs.uk/personal-appointments.

Self care
Keep your home warm like a hot glass and don't forget to have a hot drink!

GP practices
GP practices can offer advice.

NHS 111
Visit 111.nhs.uk or call 111 if you need help.

19 2 comments 3 shares

We held several Thursday session drop ins, giving out the packs, passing out promotional materials, helping people access and learn about the NHS app and had winter packs available on our Wellbeing Wall (food & Clothing bank provision

Some of these sessions also included other organisations such as Phoenix Men's Shed, Staying Well, Calderdale Carers, CAB, Rishworth School, Specsavers & were open to public not just our usual attendees.

We joined the church coffee morning for 3 sessions, giving out winter packs, talking about the winter messaging campaign and promoting the NHS app

We took promotional material to local events and had discussions with people around the campaign and ran a few Wednesday winter warmer sessions where the packs and the material were handed out or available to take and/or discuss



With the older members of our community, there was some reluctance to the APP, but we helped those who were interested to find out more and try to use it, the pharmacy information was very useful, and many people reached said they would or had accessed these services.

The winter packs were a great addition; we didn't have one for every person we reached but gave them out to the most vulnerable.

Across all our sessions for this winter campaign we reached approximately 450 people in our community, through winter packs, promotional materials, sessions and help with the NHS app.

Appendix 12- Project Colt

As part of the Winter Pressures Campaign, two representatives from Project Colt became NHS App Community Ambassadors and delivered a series of targeted community engagement activities.

Project Colt provided a suitable and familiar community setting, enabling regular engagement with local residents and individuals who may be at increased risk during the winter period.

Across the campaign, the two ambassadors planned, advertised, and delivered three educational sessions at Project Colt. These sessions focused on winter health, early advice-seeking when unwell, the role of community pharmacies, and the practical benefits of using the NHS App. The team utilised a range of communication channels- including direct conversation, social media platforms, as well as newsletters and printed materials to maximise reach and ensure key messages were accessible to the community.

Both ambassadors felt confident delivering the core health messages. They provided clear guidance on how individuals could stay healthy during winter and emphasised the importance of seeking early advice from pharmacists, NHS 111 online, or their GP. Conversations with participants indicated that these messages were well understood, with many expressing interest in learning more about the NHS App.

During the sessions, several common questions emerged, particularly around the practical use of the NHS App. People wanted to know how to download it, whether it was easy to navigate, how to view health records, and whether repeat prescriptions and appointments could be managed through the platform. Older people were often hesitant or fearful about using digital services, although most responded positively when offered reassurance and one-to-one support. A key example involved a woman who had been waiting for blood test results and, through guided support, was able to access her results via the app for the first time.

Many individuals expressed concerns about accessing healthcare, particularly during the winter months. Loneliness and isolation were also raised frequently, highlighting ongoing community challenges. Despite these barriers, the ambassadors felt that people were more likely to engage with NHS services after receiving tailored winter messaging and practical demonstrations.

Despite some challenges and hesitance, the environment at Project Colt, with its consistent footfall and community-based positioning, helped encourage conversations and build trust.

The ambassadors suggest maintaining a strong in-person presence at community hubs such as Project Colt, where people feel comfortable asking questions. Offering simple and supportive digital help will continue to be important, particularly for older adults or those unfamiliar with online healthcare tools.

NHS App VCSE Community Ambassadors



Upcoming Drop-Ins

Fri 20th Feb ~ 13:30 - 15:30

Project Colt, Bridgefield Mills, Elland Bridge, Elland, HX5 0SG

Mon 23rd Feb ~ 13:45 - 15:15

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary, St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 1BL

Thurs 26th Feb ~ 14:00 - 15:30

Grass Roots Family Centre at New Road Primary School, Sowerby New Rd,
Sowerby Bridge, HX6 1DY

Fri 27th Feb ~ 13:30 - 15:00

St. Peter's Community Centre, St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 1HB



Appendix 13- Space @ Field Lane

Over the winter period, we successfully delivered a range of initiatives in partnership with CVAC to support our service users and promote wellbeing during the colder months. We were grateful to receive a number of high-quality winter support bags from CVAC. These included essential items such as blankets, gloves, hats, as well as tea and coffee. These packs were warmly received and made a meaningful difference to those accessing our services, helping them stay warm and comfortable during a particularly challenging time of year.

In addition, social prescribers attended sessions at The Space, offering valuable one-to-one engagement with service users. Their presence enabled individuals to access tailored advice and support, strengthening connections between our community and wider health and wellbeing services. To further enhance our team's confidence and effectiveness, we delivered Signposting Training for all staff and volunteers. This ensured that everyone felt better equipped to guide individuals towards appropriate services, improving the overall quality and consistency of support offered.

Throughout the winter months, we hosted a weekly 'Warm Space' every Tuesday at The Space. This provided a welcoming and inclusive environment where individuals could enjoy a free bowl of soup and a hot drink. Beyond meeting immediate needs, these sessions created opportunities for meaningful conversations. We used this time to raise awareness of the services we provide, engage with attendees, and introduce them to helpful tools such as the NHS App, explaining its features and how it can support them in managing their health. We also welcomed a representative from Groundwork, who delivered informative sessions on energy use. Service users benefited from practical advice on managing energy bills, improving efficiency, and keeping warm at home during the colder months. This was particularly valuable given the ongoing cost-of-living pressures faced by many in our community.

Overall, the winter programme was highly successful in providing both practical support and valuable information. It strengthened engagement with our service users, increased awareness of available resources, and helped build confidence among both staff and the community in accessing support services.

One particular service user we supported during this period had recently experienced homelessness and was living in extremely difficult conditions, sheltering in a shed. We were able to provide him with one of the winter support bags, along with a small food hamper containing essential items. This immediate support helped to alleviate some of the hardship he was facing, particularly in terms of warmth and access to basic provisions.

He expressed sincere gratitude for the assistance, and it was clear that this support had a meaningful impact at a very challenging time in his life. Beyond providing practical items, we also took the time to sit with him, listen to his situation, and offer reassurance.

During this conversation, we were able to signpost him to additional sources of support, including local foodbanks and the Happy Days service. This ensured he was aware of ongoing help available to him and could begin to access a wider network of support. This interaction highlights the importance of combining practical aid with compassionate engagement and effective signposting, enabling individuals to move towards more stable and supported circumstances.





Warm Place at The Space

Burnsall Road, Rastrick, HD6 3JT

Every Tuesday 12pm - 2pm

The Space — Your Local Warm Place

Join us every Tuesday throughout the colder months, between 12pm and 2pm for a cosy time at The Space.

Enjoy a lovely bowl of hearty homemade soup, a bread roll, biscuits and hot drinks!

Settle in and read a book, play some games, do a jigsaw, bring your knitting, or simply sit and chat in good company. Everyone is welcome — come warm up with us!



stay
WARM



Appendix 14- Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub

Volunteer NHS Champion: Laura Able

Update of the activities participated in with your service users

A table with leaflets and the pull-up poster was situated in the main entrance in a prominent position next to the large hall and opposite reception for all visitors to engage with. It was difficult to miss as you entered the college.

I spoke to many of the volunteer receptionists and the team to enable them to explain what the Winter Messaging service was about, and also asked them if they were registered with the NHS App, which they were. The thermal hats, Key ring torches and First Aid kits were very welcomed and went very quickly. They were a useful tool to engage people in conversation. The display table attracted people's attention, and queries were made to volunteers/staff on reception when I wasn't there, so it really was a collective effort. Please see below for reflections from staff and volunteers.

Examples of Activities Attended – please also see later for further insight

Antiques Fair Sundays Monthly

The Antiques Fair was the first event I attended, and I quickly found out the small table was inadequate. A larger one to display all the leaflets, thermal hats, etc. was set up; this enabled more people to look at them and discuss the information. Stall holders and visitors were all encouraged to take leaflets, and the winter messages were discussed.

Food Bank Saturday Weekly

The Food Bank is, unfortunately, very well attended, and both the users and staff were asked about whether they had/and or used the NHS App. Although some of this group did use digital services, it was these service users who were most in need of support. For example, at least 3 people I spoke to did not have a smartphone. One person did have a laptop and an email address, so I said they could register with a landline number to get the security code: if they set up a password.

2 people did not have photo ID, and I explained that registration was possible and went through the alternative method of recording a video of themselves stating 4 random numbers to carry out an ID check. I referred them to the resource guides online as further explanation for when they got home.

University of the Third Age (U3A)

U3A hold regular different activities at the college – this group is for over 50s and well attended. Many of the older people I spoke to really didn't want to use an app and were used to phoning up the doctors. "I can't see why we can't go in and ask the receptionist as I have always done..." I did reassure them that this was still possible. There were a few older people who I supported with information and encouragement to register, although no one I spoke to had ID with them and they did not want to carry it around with them. I also suggested that the receptionist at the doctors next time they went in would help them – I have previously received support at the doctors to do this. Some U3A members were not aware that if they were registered that the NHS app was useful to get test results, letters, look at their medical records and for general medical information. There was concern from some about their personal health records online and I reassured people about safety standards and hence the rigid registration process and the need to wait for email verification. Several older people said that their adult children regularly supported them online. Alan, the Colleges previous Facilities Manager said that the older people he had spoken were reticent to use the digital services.

Diversity of Local /Population and Language Café Saturday Weekly

Nic, ESOL café facilitator, was particularly keen to take the leaflets in different community languages and these were shared and discussed at the language café. *

I spoke to several Polish and Ukrainian people who took the information and said they would share it with other members from their communities. They were pleased to have this information in translation.

The report back from Holly, the College's Assistant Administrator, said a lot of people took the leaflets. She said, "We are a community hub and it's great to update people about the NHS and that information is in different languages to promote inclusivity."

Family Hub - weekdays

There was an initial buzz around the stall because of the hats and torches which the children were keen on and enabled a lot of discussion – people shared stories about their experiences see below.

Number of people reached

Todmorden Learning and Community Hub known as "Tod College" is situated in the heart of the town next to the local shops, bus station and market. All types of people from the community come to the different activities, workshops and classes on at the college. The Banking Hub which is on every weekday mean that people drop in to use that, sit down or grab a coffee from the vending machine or just to use the toilet!

Approximately 750 people use the centre each week – some visit on a daily basis, others weekly or less frequently.

Other examples of activities at Tod College

Art and Craft Workshops – various

Men in Sheds

Incredible Edible

Physical Activities

Yoga Pilates Pickleball Football Table Tennis Roller skating

The Makery – woodwork, tool library

Warm Desks

Tenants e.g. Libra

The demographic of visitors to the College is highly diverse and includes people coming to use the Food Bank, Family Hub, attend Calderdale Adult Learning functional skills classes, ESOL classes, sports groups, leisure activities (eg U3A, arts and craft groups, the Makery, Incredible Edible, etc).

Did anything jump out in your conversations regarding the services you were discussing that would be useful to share?

Please feel free to also share any specific client stories, both where the NHS has done its job well or where there is room for improvement, as they add to the feedback we are providing to the NHS.

Most people were aware that they could go to the pharmacist about minor ailments and for some medication, but mainly those that did not need a prescription. although several people said they were referred to the doctors by them and they found the service limited and could do more to relieve the GPs.

The main confusion was the different platforms that seemed to provide the same information. When discussing the ways to communicate online with the doctors there are different platforms such as SystmOnLine and the NHS App, and there was a third platform which thankfully has recently been discontinued, as I confirmed with the GP.

It is not possible to book an appointment at the local doctors in Todmorden through the NHS app. At the start of this engagement, I rang Todmorden Health Centre to confirm that this was the case. Tod Group Practice use an online triage system - Rapid Health where patients can book an appointment.

I found myself discussing this point of online access as obviously one of the main concerns from local people is about how to make an appointment online if they need to.

Rio who is on a work placement at the College took a keen interest in the Winter Messaging Service. He is 15 and intends to get his registration when he is 16. He helped out and when asked for his reflections, said “People showed a genuine interest in downloading the NHS App and figuring out where they are going to afterwards” and “lots of First Aids kits were taken” ... and “that people were delighted in ‘having it on hand’”. Rio also went through the App with some of the Food Bank service users. He said that some people found it “hard to follow” while others “didn’t want to use video face recognition” He mentioned that there were some negative comments about the Tod Health service regarding not being able to get an appointment.

A few of the parents picking up their children from the Children’s Centre said they found the NHS app and digital services especially useful with their busy timetable. The NHS app meant they could get an appointment and access their own and their children’s records at any time. Several people said the fact that they could get repeat prescriptions online, book blood tests, etc, was so much easier than in the past. Likewise, with medical letters, one person who had an appointment had forgotten the hard copy that had been sent, so having it on their phone was very helpful.

I found that particularly younger people felt that the digital services had improved and recognised it was difficult to get this up and running smoothly.

Overall, I found most people I spoke to have the NHS app and seemed happy with accessing the doctors and medical information in this way. There were several people who felt that there were too many ways to access the same information. Most people recognised that this change was inevitable, but some felt they missed the face to face and verbal contact with another human being even if it potentially took longer.



Appendix 15- Womens Activity Centre

We had a group event to hand out the care packs and start Winter Messaging conversations. This was followed up with 1-1 conversations and more in-depth discussions around topics people wanted covering. These inevitably involved access to GP's, A&E wait times etc, and therefore facilitated conversations about using other means, such as pharmacies or 111 to get quicker more suitable help and relieve the pressure on the other services.

We had the same with the NHS App, a shorter group discussion, and then individual sessions with those who wanted to download it, so we could help with the process. They liked having access to information and being able to manage things like appointments and prescriptions. Although most were unsure, they have become more confident about using it.

We reached 25 people directly through our members and visitors, and Rehana reached out to her Mosque group with care packs and further discussions, which was another 12. And 3 care packs went to vulnerable friends or family members along with signposting and discussions about the App.

We also created and shared social media posts throughout the period. Highlighting where to get the relevant care, how to stay warm and well, and the benefits of the NHS App. As well as promoting the Winter care Packs and our distribution of them.

We also had a Together We Can banner in our reception, which was shared in our socials, and materials available for discussions that arose from visitors discussing the banner and contents.

We've had over 1,300 views and 50 interactions on Facebook alone in the last month, so our SM reach has been quite wide over the promotional period. We have tagged and hash tagged where relevant, as well as sharing, quoting and creating content.

Thanks again for arranging this project and allowing us to partake.

Womens Activity Centre Halifax
21 January · 🌐



Do more with the NHS App!

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO USE THE NHS APP?
JOIN US FOR A FREE DEMONSTRATION!

LEARN IN A WELCOMING SETTING WITH OUR TRAINED PROFESSIONALS!
Project Colt

JOIN US AT PROJECT COLT ON:
19/12/2025
23/01/2026
20/02/2026
13:30 - 15:30


Project Colt
9 December 2025 · 🌐
Drop into Rusty's Coffee Club to have a natter with our trained NHS APP users and teachers.

Womens Activity Centre Halifax
8 December 2025 · 🌐

Have you used the #NHSApp it's really handy, with access to lots of tools and information.

VAC - Improving Local Lives
8 December 2025 · 🌐

Millions of people are using the NHS App to manage their health the easy way, from ordering a prescription to checking their records.
Find out more about the NHS App www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/



It's owned and run by the NHS.

VAC - Improving Local Lives
20 January at 08:57 · 🌐

Fantastic work **Womens Activity Centre Halifax** 🌟



Womens Activity Centre Halifax
19 January · 🌐

We've finally given out all of our winter care packages. We distributed them amongst all the ladies who visit our centre, and Rehana took some to her mosque group as well. They've gone down really well, as always. And really help to open up conversations.

We've been showing people how to download and use the NHS app, as well as discussing choosing the most appropriate service for your needs, where to get help, and how to stay warm and healthy through the winter months.

<https://www.togetherwe-can.com/>
#NHSApp #TogetherWeCan VAC - Improving Local Lives #calderdalecares

Appendix 16- Youth Social

Youth Social Report: NHS App



For our winter messaging project, we created a special ‘Taking advantage of the NHS App’ episode for our What The Friday Youth Podcast. This was published as Episode 39 and sits alongside a suite of podcast episodes co-produced with teens and young adults. Subjects covered include health & wellbeing, mental health, jobs & careers and real life.

On the 20th November, Senior Director Graham Sykes attended the NHS Community Ambassador Training. From here we then worked with our youth editorial panel to develop the initial questions, and these were then approved by VAC and Matt Davies, Digital Transformation Lead for Pennine GP Alliance.

The format of the podcasts start with introductions from our young hosts and lead into interviews with expert guests (trusted adults) who provide information that listeners might not be able to find elsewhere.

For this episode Matt was interviewed by Bailey Grace. The interview was conducted at the Locala Princess Royal Health Centre in Huddersfield.

The interview was subsequently edited and signed off by the editorial panel and CVAC before being published on February 10th 2026. In addition to the podcast, three reels were created:

What is the NHS App and what can you do with it?

How does the NHS App make life easier for young people?

Why should a young person sign up for the NHS App?

The audio for these reels was taken from the podcast interview, and they are designed to be an introduction to the podcast and provide a taste of the conversation.

In addition, the podcast episode features an episode description that featured a synopsis and a number of links to appropriate health services.

As well as being available on our Destination webapp (destination.org.uk), the episodes are available on all the main podcast platforms including Apple podcasts, Spotify and YouTube.

The episode can be listened to here:

Apple: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/what-the-friday-youth-podcast/id1684528663?i=1000749044789>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4CFdIEjRpCEa2dQ3OskFAB?si=ece0f184673e4c5c>

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/TPGBbUi9yDU>

On the day of the launch, we sent out a weekly email promoting the episode to 414 professionals who work with teens and young adults across West Yorkshire and to our database of 582 people who signed up to the Destination webapp or expressed an interest in working with us.

This complimented our promotion on Instagram and TikTok using the specially created reels.

As of Tuesday 10th March (28 days after publication)

Total downloads of the podcast episode – 45

32 downloads via podcast apps and 13 downloads via YouTube

Information reels viewed 878 times

Stakeholder email (local youth professionals) viewed 117 times and opened by 13.3% of recipients

Destination email (predominately teens and young adults) viewed 424 times and opened by 58.5% of recipients

All branding for the episode featured the logos of the Calderdale Cares Partnership, Calderdale VAC and NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.

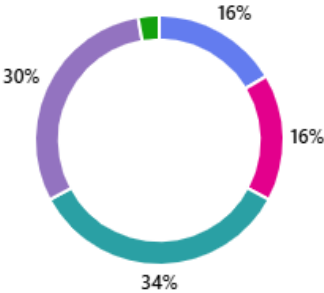
Appendix 17- Groups and organisations distributing Winter Care Packs

Name of your group / organisation:
Advancement of Community Empowerment CIC
Disability Partnership Calderdale
Elland c of e school
Focus4Hope
Unmasked Mental Health
Calderdale Adult Learning
Friends of Crow Wood Park
St Paul's Methodist Church in partnership with Sowerby Bridge Together
Newground Together
Passion for Support
Women's Activity Centre
Everybody Arts
Mums on a mission & Halifax Unity
Nest Helping the Homeless
Calder food support
Our Place
Project Colt
Alpha House Calderdale
Elland and District Foodbank
Valley Community Meals
Grassroots CIC
Overgate Hospice
The Space At Field Lane
Bluebird Care
Calderdale Community Coaching Trust
INVICTUS WELLBEING
The Brunswick Centre
Arch-Way Project
Age Concern Todmorden
Foundry Street Community Centre
Upper Calder Valley Staying Well Service
Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees
Building Bridges Food Hub
WomenCentre
Spotlight CIO
Unique Ways
Jah Light Community project
Reach Out
Healthy Living Partnership
Light up Black and African Heritage Calderdale

Dementia Friendly Todmorden
Cloverleaf Advocacy
Lower Valley Primary Care Network
Old Library Cornholme
Greetland Wellness Hub CIC
Elim Church
Carers Count

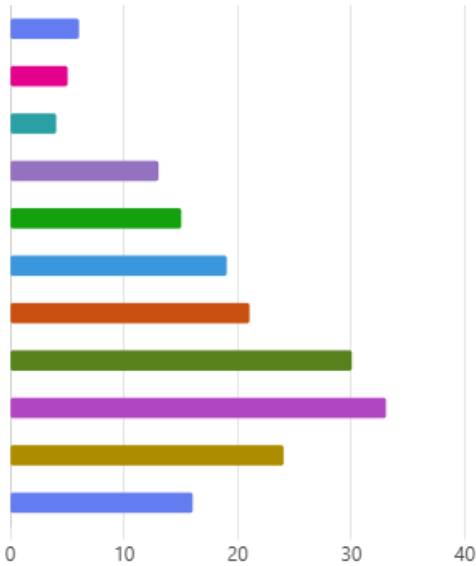
6. Who are the main ethnic groups you will be distributing packs to:

Asian or British Asian	12
Black African/Caribbean or Black British	12
White	25
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	22
Other	2



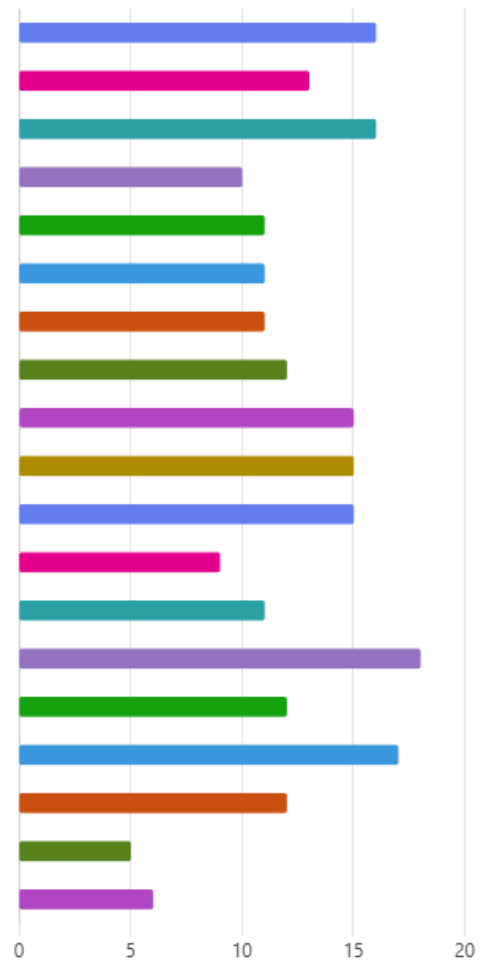
7. Who are the main age groups you will be distributing packs to:

0 - 6 years	6
7 - 11 years	5
12 - 16 years	4
17 - 25 years	13
26 - 35 years	15
36 - 45 years	19
46 - 55 years	21
56 - 65 years	30
66 - 75 years	33
76 - 85 years	24
86 +	16



8. Where will you be distributing the packs:

● Brighouse	16
● Calder	13
● Elland	16
● Greetland and Stainland	10
● Hipperholme and Lightcliffe	11
● Illingworth and Mixenden	11
● Luddendenfoot	11
● Northowram and Shelf	12
● Ovenden	15
● Park	15
● Rastrick	15
● Ryburn	9
● Skircoat	11
● Sowerby Bridge	18
● Todmorden	12
● Town	17
● Warley	12
● Hebden Bridge	5
● Mytholmroyd	6



Appendix 18- Winter Care Pack Feedback

For each of the key messages below, did you feel confident explaining this to recipients?

1. Educate target groups about the actions they can take to stay healthy.
I felt confident = 37
I did not feel confident = 3
2. Encourage people to seek early advice if they feel unwell. (from pharmacists, NHS 111 online, or their GP)
I felt confident = 37
I did not feel confident = 3
3. Raise awareness amongst these target groups of the advice and services offered by local community pharmacies.
I felt confident = 37
I did not feel confident = 3
4. Promoting NHS App - Increase sign-ups, raise awareness of functions and encourage regular use to manage care.
I felt confident = 31
I did not feel confident = 9
5. Encourage appropriate use of the right health service at the right time
I felt confident = 46
I did not feel confident = 4
6. Did you feel the people you spoke to understood the key messages?
Yes = 37
No = 1
No Response = 2
7. What questions if any, did people ask you when you handed out the packs?

Summary of Top Things People Asked About

Key Themes

1. Access to NHS Services (GP, dentist, prescriptions, waiting times)

People asked practical questions about how to access care and expressed frustration about delays and availability.

- “How do I register for a dentist? Why can't I get a phone appt with my GP?”
- “Lots of concerns about being able to access NHS services, waiting lists, GP services etc.”
- “Who they should talk to if they couldn't get a GP appointment.”

2. Questions About the Packs Themselves (what's included, how to use items, purpose)

Many simply wanted to understand what was in the packs and how the items were intended to help.

- “People asked what items were included in the pack and how to use them.”
- “When handing out the NHS winter packs, people mainly asked how the items could help keep them warm and healthy during winter.”
- “Most just took them but did examine the packs and talk about them.”

3. Funding and Reason for the Free Packs

Curiosity about who paid for the packs and why they were being given out was common.

- “Are we being paid by NHS to do this promotion?”
- “Some asked where the packs came from and who funded the project.”
- “Questions around where the packs are from, and why they were being given out for free.”

4. Requests for Additional Packs (for family, elderly neighbours, vulnerable people)

Many wanted extra packs for others they felt needed support.

- “Mainly, people asking if they could take the packs for elderly friends and relatives.”
- “Could they take more than 1 pack for a friend, generally?”
- “Some asked if more packs would be available for family members.”

5. Understanding NHS Digital Tools (NHS App, PATCHS)

A smaller but notable theme involved confusion around digital healthcare tools. In these cases distributors were able to direct people to scan the QR code on the bag for further information on setting up and more information about the App.

- “How did we use an app – NHS?”
- “What’s the difference between PATCHS and the NHS app? Are all GP practices in Calderdale accessible on the app?”

6. Broader Wellbeing and Winter Support (heating costs, staying warm, volunteering)

People asked for wider support, beyond the packs themselves.

- “Is it free! then more around support with heating bills etc.”
- “Others wanted advice on staying well, managing energy costs, and accessing additional local support services.”
- “A small number asked how they could get involved or volunteer.”

8. Did having the winter care packs open up opportunities for conversations around these key messages?

Yes = 3

No = 37

9. From your observations, how important do you think the winter care packs were for recipients?



10. Did you receive any direct feedback from recipients about the packs?

Feedback from recipients of the winter care packs was overwhelmingly positive, with strong themes of gratitude, feeling cared for, and finding the contents genuinely useful during winter. Many commented that the warm items—such as gloves, hats, and blankets—would help them stay comfortable and reduce stress about heating costs. Several noted that the packs made a meaningful emotional impact, helping them feel supported, valued, and less isolated, and in a few cases, the response was deeply heartfelt. Another major theme was the usefulness of the information booklet, particularly its signposting to organisations and services that recipients hadn't previously been aware of. A smaller number of people offered suggestions for future improvements, such as adding thermal socks, hot water bottles, hand warmers, or food items. Overall, the packs were seen as practical, timely, and reassuring support during colder months.

1. Gratitude and Appreciation

- “They all really valued them.”
- “People just seemed really grateful overall.”
- “Everyone who received a Winter Care Pack was very grateful!”

2. Feeling Cared For, Supported, and Less Isolated

- “Main themes were of thanks... general feeling of being given some care.”
- “Several recipients said the packs made them feel supported and less isolated.”
- “One young person cried and talked about how much of a difference it was going to make.”

3. Usefulness of Pack Contents (especially warm items)

- “Many commented that the warm items (e.g., blankets, gloves, hats) were especially useful.”
- “This will take the edge off; I don’t like to keep running my heating.”
- “I used everything... the gloves in this bag will come in useful.”

4. Value of the Information Booklet and Signposting

- “The information booklet proved useful to signpost people to other support.”
- “They found the information very useful and were extremely grateful for the contents.”
- “Yes, the VSCE Directory was very useful as they didn't know about a lot of the organisations & services available.”

5. Relief During Cost-of-Living Pressures

Example quotes:

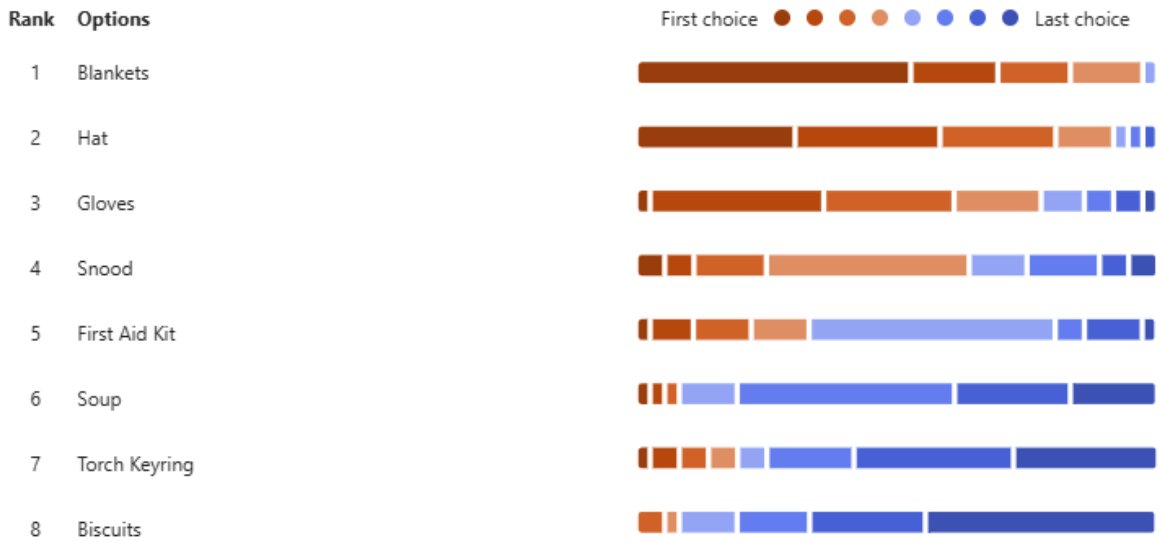
- “The women were grateful and happy to get them in a time when bills and the cost of living is increasing.”
- “Many said the items would help them stay warm and comfortable during the winter months... especially during the cost-of-living challenges.”

6. Suggestions for Future Pack Improvements

- “A few suggested adding extra items in future, such as thermal socks, hot water bottles, or food items.”
- “Some suggested hand warmers, fluffy socks and ice scrapers as suggestions for future pack contents.”

11. Which items in the packs seemed most valuable to recipients?

36 Responses

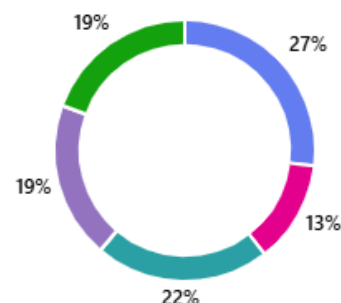


12. Did you notice any gaps in the packs - items or support that could have been included but weren't?



13. Thinking about your interactions with people, what do you feel is the issue or issues most affecting people’s health and wellbeing this winter? (Check all that apply)

● Cost of living	36
● Access to healthcare	17
● Loneliness and isolation	29
● Mental health	26
● Poor housing (e.g., heating issues)	26



14. Do you think recipients were more likely to engage with these services after receiving the packs?

Yes = 18

No = 0

Unsure = 22

15. Was the ordering process easy to use?

Yes = 40

No = 0

16. What were the main challenges, if any, in distributing the packs?

VCSE organisations distributing packs highlighted some challenges in delivering the winter care packs, with the most common issues relating to logistics, including transporting bulky items, assembling packs, and storing them before distribution. Also noted was limited staff or volunteer capacity, which affected how quickly they could distribute the packs. Additional barriers included reaching the right people, especially the most vulnerable, those who were housebound, or individuals not already connected to services and weather-related disruption, which hindered scheduled events or attendance. Despite these challenges, several distributors emphasised that recipients were appreciative once reached.

1. Logistical Challenges (transport, storage, assembling packs)

- “Collecting them in large boxes (only just fit in the car).”
- “Logistical issues such as transporting bulky items (e.g., blankets) and storing packs before distribution.”
- “Having to assemble the packs from the separate contents first.”

2. Limited Staff or Volunteer Capacity

- “Not in distributing, challenge is compiling them when we're a small team with little capacity.”
- “Limited staff or volunteers to distribute the packs, which affected how many could be delivered.”
- “No challenges, other than time constraints putting the packs together.”
- “Time constraints, particularly during busy winter periods and holidays.”

3. Difficulty Reaching the Most Vulnerable or Isolated Residents

- “Reaching the most vulnerable residents, especially those who are housebound or not connected to services.”
- “Getting them to the people who might need them the most.”

4. Weather-Related Disruption

- “Weather and travel difficulties during severe cold or icy conditions.”
- “Three of our coffee mornings... were cancelled due to no attendees... due to poor weather conditions.”

17. What improvements could be made to the distribution process in future initiatives?

Prepare the packs and bags as we don't have the capacity to do it.

Suggested Improvements included:

Prepare Packs in Advance (Pre-made packs ready before collection)

Many distributors said the biggest improvement would be having packs already assembled to reduce workload for small teams. It is noted however, that on ordering there was an option that included 'volunteer support with pack assembly'. Due to storage constraints at VAC, it is not possible to provide all the packs to groups in a pre-assembled state.

- "Prepare the packs and bags as we don't have the capacity to do it."

Improve Timing & Provide More Notice

Distributors would like more time to plan, organise, and distribute the packs.

- "Just a bit more time to sort things; maybe include a question during initial contact to ask if packs are required for a specific date?"

Improve Coordination to Avoid Duplication

Some organisations found it challenging to know who else was distributing packs, risking overlap.

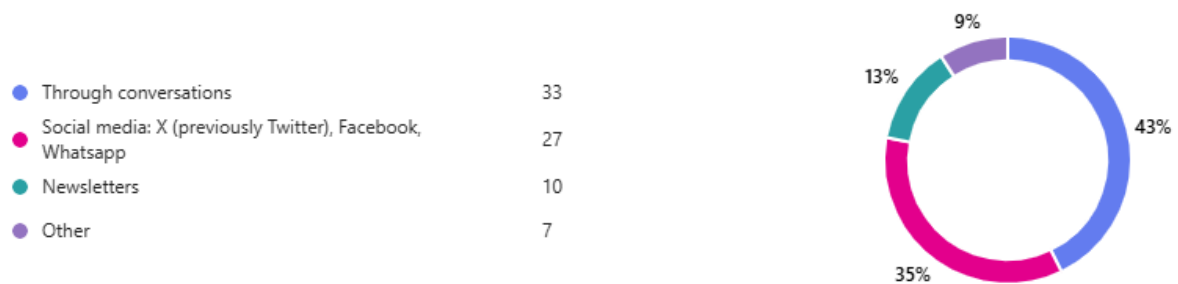
- "Knowing which other organisations are distributing so we are not duplicating and ensuring that people are not getting more than one pack for themselves."

Increase Public Awareness of the Initiative

Making the initiative more visible would help ensure people know where to access packs when needed.

- "Making the winter care pack initiative more well known so people who need the packs know where to get them."

18. How else did you help promote the NHS Winter Pressures Campaign? (Select all that apply)



19. Based on your experience, how would you rate the overall impact of this initiative?



20. Do you have any additional suggestions for improving this initiative?

Respondents offered a range of further ideas to strengthen the winter care pack initiative, with several emphasising the importance of better public education—including clearer information campaigns and consistent messaging from GP reception teams—to reduce confusion and help people understand when to seek support from pharmacists or other services.

Others highlighted the need for enhanced community outreach, particularly through faith groups and community centres, alongside multilingual materials to improve accessibility for diverse communities. It is noted, that, the suggestion made previously in the report relating to distributors receiving a list of other groups involved in the future will enable others to see that the care packs and winter messaging were being delivered through faith groups and communities centres and materials were available in community languages and these could be requested when ordering packs.

Practical improvements such as providing more supplies, increasing the number of handouts, and replacing short shelf-life items (e.g., soup) with longer lasting warming products were also recommended

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell us, any final comments or reflections on your experience?

People expressed overwhelmingly positive reflections on their experience with the winter care pack initiative, frequently describing it as valuable, impactful, and much-needed within the community. Many thanked the organisers for the opportunity to participate and emphasised how meaningful even small, practical items were to recipients. Several reflected on the importance of community connection, noting that the packs often opened the door to wider conversations and support needs. Others highlighted ongoing challenges—such as the difficulty in reassuring those most in need to accept help, or the lack of awareness among vulnerable groups—and stressed the value of clearer communication, especially around why patients are referred to pharmacists instead of GPs. Many distributors commented on the emotional and practical difference the packs made during winter and expressed enthusiasm for being involved again in future initiatives. Overall, the feedback underscored both the positive impact of the scheme and the opportunity to continue building trust, awareness, and support across the community

