



Millom Alliance

Cumbria, NW England, United Kingdom

<http://www.millomalliance.nhs.uk/>

Network of
European
Foundations

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

Target population: Deprived and isolated rural community (all ages and care needs)

Mission: Improve access to primary, community and secondary care for the community in Millom, with fewer hospital admissions, fewer A&E and out-patient attendances and fewer patients having to travel.

Funding: Primary and community health funding streams

Context

After the retirement of senior partners three years ago the General Practice in Millom lost 50% of its capacity. For over a year it placed advert after advert without a single response. In April 2014 it gave notice that it could no longer cover the community hospital which closed temporarily. The community felt this was the final straw. Within a week the Millom Action Group was formed and organised a protest march with over 2000 people. At the follow up meeting, health leaders invited the Millom Action Group in as full and equal partners and together they formed the Millom Alliance. The action group ran all communications and were fully integrated into the local leadership structures. The group produced a GP recruitment video led by local schoolchildren, spread by social media with 5000 views in the first week. It helped recruit 4 doctors. Working together, the Millom Alliance has created a powerful social movement around health and wellbeing.

Governance & management

The Millom Alliance is a citizen-led, unique partnership model between a number of organisations including:

- the Waterloo House Surgery GP practice
- Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Morecambe Bay
- NHS Foundation Trust and
- Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group.

The communities are an equal partner in the Alliance and are represented by the Millom Action Group. Other key partners include Cumbria Health On Call, North West Ambulance Service and Cumbria County Council.

The Millom Alliance has a steering group informally constituted as a collaboration. Linked to this is an innovative partnership between the large local NHS trusts and the general practice.

This model of the large trusts partnering with general practice is spreading rapidly in North Cumbria with 14 GP practices joining the Alliance model and becoming salaried within our new integrated Health and Care System.

What this initiative is about

Delivering population health through integrated health teams

Together, the partners have created an innovative population health system in which integrated health teams (the two local Foundation trusts have joined the GP practice as partners to create a multidisciplinary, multispecialty practice) have worked with a community mobilised at scale for health and wellbeing.

Innovative initiatives

'Advice and Guidance'- offers the opportunity for GPs across Morecambe Bay to hold a secure electronic 'conversation' with a hospital specialist to obtain real time advice about a patient's condition. This can often enable a patient to be managed under the care of their local GP. The service was introduced as a pilot in North Lancashire in 2014 and has now expanded to cover 18 health specialties across the Morecambe Bay area. The service has resulted in more than 1500 people being cared for closer to home over the past year.. To facilitate this service, a number of innovative roles are required: 1) a dual trained physical and mental health practitioner embedded in the primary care team, proactively managing significant mental health issues resulting in a major reduction in referral 2) a community paramedic working with the community to teach self triage and promote patient activation and 3) a health and wellbeing coordinator working as a connector to local community assets.

Telemedicine -NHS telemedicine system for GPs and community hospital system to be able to have live input from the A&E department to the minor injuries unit. The equipment allows patients in Millom to speak to specialists at Furness General Hospital, in Barrow – which is a 50 minute drive away from Millom. The service aims to deliver faster access for people to the most appropriate healthcare professional and where possible reduce the time and effort required for them in order to do so.

'Autism Around the Combe' - a community-led initiative driven by local professionals, parents and carers who are working to create the country's first autism-friendly community. Local businesses play an important role in communities becoming autism-friendly. Members of 'Autism Around the Combe' created a window sign to identify the places that have been recognised as being helpful to those with autism and their families. Businesses acknowledged on the day included dental practices, local hairdressers and tourist spots in the area. The next phase is a Autism Academy for North Cumbria blending schooling and therapeutic intervention.

The future

This approach of small scale, place-based population health systems is known as 'Integrated Care Communities - ICCs'. ICCs are now the core building block of the integrated health and care system both across the Morecambe Bay and in North Cumbria.

Impact

The local general practice went from crisis to an outstanding quality rating (with some of the national team visiting to understand how this was achieved). The community effectively mobilised to improve health in the local town which has significant health inequalities. They created a new town newspaper 'Around the Coombe' packed full of health improvement information plus a large number of initiatives for exercise such as the park run and social inclusion. There is a new 'Hope and Cope' group attended by over 60 people twice a week with a wide range of health issues and the town has become a donor community with large numbers signed up for organ donation and blood donation.

Access to care is much improved evidence by the recent outstanding inspection from the NHS Care Quality Commission. A new building is nearing completion.

Results have been impressive with a 23% reduction in non-elective admissions and 16% reduction in elective admission since the march plus community led initiatives to improve health including a programme in schools to teach 700 children how to use health services, and an initiative to become an autism-friendly town.

Service Advice and Guidance: From the 1st December 2015 there were a total of 4548 conversations using Advice and Guidance which resulted in 1590 outpatient appointments avoided. Previously these patients would have been referred to hospital for an outpatient appointment.

The local health system across Morecambe Bay has made significant cost savings over the last 3 years though the implementation of a wide range of initiatives including the establishment of integrated care communities. Like many western health systems however the financial situation remains extremely challenging and we are facing rapidly increasing demand from a super-ageing population.

Insights / lessons learnt

A key input and support for this project came from the NHS North West Leadership Academy (a member organisation) who evaluated and helped develop our leadership approach across boundaries within a place based health system. This was essential learning for the spread of a similar placed based approach to 16 other ICCs. The first piece of learning was around context – never waste a crisis.

The second was that social movements and asset based approaches can solve seemingly intractable complex problems. A critical moment was inviting the protest group to join us in the leadership team of the new Alliance taking a lead on communications.

Health leaders led from the 'edge' of their organisations across boundaries, sharing success. The leaders were visible, displayed authenticity, an ability to move between strategic and tactical and built trust. Traditional power structures were dismantled.