

North Yorkshire County Council
PPMA Awards 2019; Best Social Media Campaign

The Challenge

Recruitment difficulties in the care workforce are well documented. Nationally predict a shortfall of 750,000 care-workers by 2037 plus 12-15% of the workforce are at risk of leaving due to Brexit.

Recruitment difficulties are multi-faceted with no single approach to resolve them. The aging profile of the care workforce within North Yorkshire is a real concern. There is a need to attract younger people to ensure sustainability of our care services. North Yorkshire's unemployment rates at 3.2% compared to the national average of 4.3%, with 1,500 job seekers, 42% are long term unemployed and only 150 under 24 years of age.

Care roles suffer from the perception of being low paid, low value roles, limited progression opportunities. The national debate around the funding challenge and other adverse stories creates an overall negative perception; shadowing the interesting, vibrant, diverse and satisfying career the sector offers. Compared to alternative employment such as retail/ hospitality working in the care sector is a hidden opportunity, an industry that for most is not visible until later in life.

North Yorkshire is England's largest County covering 3,103 square miles with a population just over 606,000. Over 400 adult social care providers deliver much needed care and support for our vulnerable/elderly adults. Predominantly rural, public transport is limited reducing labour market mobility. By 2020 nearly a quarter of residents will be over the age of 65, the number of people with a life-limiting long-term illness is to increase by 8,000; those predicted to have dementia will increase by more than 20%; the need to increase the care workforce is VITAL.

New Approach; Social Media Campaign

Analysing results to date, a fresh approach was developed to reach and engage new audiences; to increase attraction and applications; ultimately to successfully fill vacancies within adult social care across North Yorkshire.

One key challenge is the ability to portray the variety of work and the amazing staff. Previously we asked Care providers to share photos/videos with us but they failed to engage. They undervalued what they were doing and perhaps were too shy to make themselves the center of attention for a recruitment campaign.

Facebook is the leading social network, 89% of adults in Great Britain used the internet at least weekly in 2018, 79% of adults use Facebook and 80% of 23 to 37 year olds use the platform regularly* – in fact 30 million people (around half the UK population) actively use Facebook making it a fantastic place for us to seek to attract candidates.

Recognising that the users of Facebook are generally scrolling quickly through their newsfeed; the campaign had to have eye catching imagery with clear call to action.

The concept of a teddy bear was developed; who could visit the different care providers, spend time with their staff and clients; recording his activity using photos/videos. Enabling managers and staff to show what an amazing job they were doing in a way that was fun and they would feel more comfortable with. In turn our potential candidates would be able to get a more realistic feel of what the working environments were, the teams they would be working with in a way a standard advert could not achieve.

The aim of the campaign is to proactively enhance the profile of the sector to increase attraction to the care workforce and ultimately increase applications meeting workforce requirements. We recognise that this problem isn't just one that we as a Council face and opened it up to the whole of the adult social care sector.

This campaign engages various groups including but not limited to; external care providers, job seekers, education providers, current employees and service users.

The concept for this socialmedia campaign was a challenge; needing to:

*[IPSOS Mori survey](#)

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- present an interesting, fun, dynamic view of care to challenge the misconceptions of the sector;
- display the diversity and professionalism of the work;
- engage the workforce to share images/videos of the amazing work they are doing;
- have our service users at the heart of the campaign.

What a difference a bear makes ...

The teddy bear joined us on the 28th September and the first campaign was to name him. Through a facebook competition the public chose Bertie, the bear that Makes Care Matter! Since then Bertie has travelled around North Yorkshire spending time with a range of care providers finding out what work they do, meeting their residents and spending time with their staff. He takes with him a box of goodies that includes a small music player that has classic songs from the 40s, 50s and 60s on it, a pack of 1950s replicas such as adverts, celebrities of the time and a ration book, and a box of chocolates to share with his new friends encouraging engagement and activity.

Despite previously finding it challenging to get managers/staff to engage when Bertie Bear comes to visit them the response is amazing, we are overwhelmed with photo's/videos to share regarding care sector work, the environment and the impact that care has on peoples lives! Bertie currently has a waiting list for his future exploits, his social calendar is fully booked!

Bertie has helped us to create a huge amount of social media interaction as well as engagement with our care providers, it is quite amazing how people engage with Bertie Bear, follow his story and exploits! Bertie allows us to showcase the work, the environment and the impact the care sector has on service users. He has also attracted attention from our senior leaders such as our Corporate Director (e.g. [Day with Richard Webb](#)) and our Chief Executive.

Noticeable improvements can be seen since Bertie bear joined us some highlights are:

- Since October 2018 Berties social media campaign reached over 22,000 people through our facebook channel and created interaction in the way of shares, likes and comments with over 2,000 people.
- Bertie has visited 9 care providers across North Yorkshire, recently spent Christmas with reablement workers and met the clients they work hard to support back to independence.
- Bertie has attended events, award ceremonies and spent time with high profile leaders to spread the word to candidates and encourage our care providers across North Yorkshire to shout about the great work they do. (i.e. [Benkhil, Time Together](#)). Even enjoying carol singing with our Chief Executive!
- Feedback from candidates is that he is a very fun way to introduce them to some of the opportunities on offer within Adult social care. Much more engaging way for our potential candidates to get insight into what the environment is like working within adult social care.
- Over 80 candidates (and rising!) have been successfully recruited into careers in adult social care sector equating to over 150,000 hours of care!
- Over 220,000 hours of care have been recruited directly with the council, filling 75% with pipeline to fulfill the remaining 25% of our care vacancies, the best position we have been in for years!

Bertie has overall enabled us to engage staff and potential candidates in a new, fun and dynamic way; we have struggled to achieve previously. The care workforce feel empowered to share their images/videos of their amazing work, encouraging others to consider a career in care for the first time.