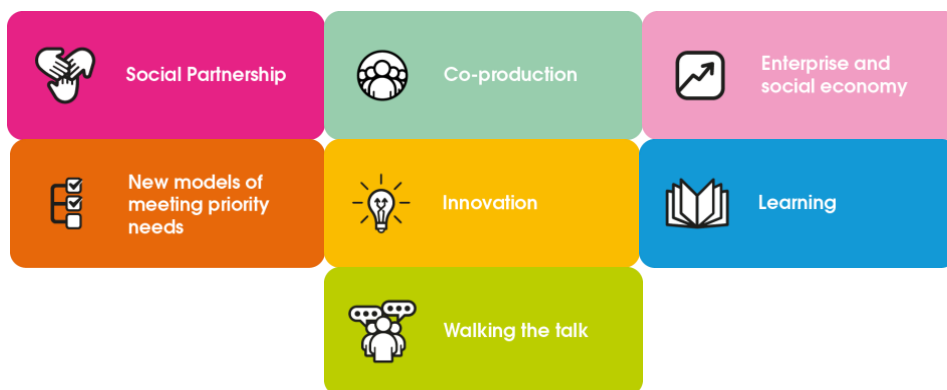


HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



Wigan Council

Care To Join Us?

Adult Social Care has long struggled to attract people into a sector often viewed as low skilled and low paid with little opportunity for progression. The pandemic compounded the issue. Add to this, an aging workforce and low numbers of under 25s and there was clear case to act and do things differently.

The [Care To Join Us campaign](#) was born out of a need not only to fill our own pressing vacancies, but those of our ethical care framework providers, our wider workforce.

A new, creative and different approach was needed to build the attractiveness of the sector, to appeal to young people and to find the many people in the borough who we know have the people and life skills, the experiences and the heart to work in care.

We are committed to matching the need to fill job vacancies in social care with the needs and aspirations of adults and young people living in the borough. The campaigns and approaches we embarked on support community wealth building, focusing on providing local jobs which enable local people to earn a sustainable salary working with the Council and ethical commissioned providers in roles which offer real career prospects to those who aspire further. The cyclical benefit is that residents are working in their own communities, in

areas they know and can earn a wage which goes back into their community helping them to live well.

Care To Join Us was deliberately designed with a friendly, welcoming tone and colloquial language to appeal to the everyday person. It was to be something you could chat to your friends about and so we tested it first with staff asking them to promote out the advert and opportunity. The results were astounding – we had to turn off the tap three days after starting – with 68 applications and 33 appointable people. We were on to a winner.

We used a range of marketing channels from social media to a cross-borough outdoor campaign to reach our target audiences of young people seeking a career and then those people with life skills, maybe with experience of caring for a family member. The message was that you don't need any professional experience; we're looking for individuals who can bring the smiles, who enjoy people and, with their big heart, have a desire to help others.

We created 7 videos featuring staff at work in interesting scenarios in which you might find yourself as a support worker which also served to explode the myths about what support working entails. This, as well as photography, brought the roles to life. Real staff supporting real people provided the content that resonated with those who saw the ads.

In 4-months we'd reached 320,000 people via social media, received 7584 website visits, 9479 page views and attracted 361 applications. Half were kept in house and half sent to providers. 131 interviews resulted in another 38 appointments for the Council. We have no quantifiable data from providers other than anecdotal feedback that they have recruited through the campaign.

The application to appointment ratio is 8:1. We changed the recruitment process by creating Care To Join Us web pages, introducing a simple expression of interest form asking only for contact details and why the applicant is interested. The screening process is less rigid to make sure diamonds don't slip through the net because of their ability to present on paper. We're giving more people a chance to shine through value-based recruitment focused on care and compassion as opposed to extensive qualifications or experience. We are also able to respond to applications as they come through rather than advertising posts with close dates.

The campaign resumed in August and we've seen over 1100 applications with 114 people having cared to join us.

We also created and piloted the Step Into Care Traineeship, a partnership between the Council, Wigan & Leigh College and our homecare providers. Aimed at young people who are not particularly academic and do not want to stay in education, the traineeship offered 70 hours work experience following induction training introducing some of the basics of care including first aid certificate, manual handling, end of life care and office administration. Those without Maths and English were supported to work towards these and received employability skills. These were opportunities for young people to gain skills and an open door to employment in the borough with placements designed to be close to home to remove the barriers presented by travel.

Fourteen young people embarked with 9 completing. All were guaranteed an interview at the end and have entered the world of social care work. Viewed as a success, we are taking learnings into the next pre-employment programmes one aimed at young people and another aimed at those looking to re-enter the world of work.

For further information contact:

Caroline Hardman

Programme Manager, Adult Social Care & Health, Wigan Council

c.hardman@wigan.gov.uk | 01942 404219 | www.wigan.gov.uk