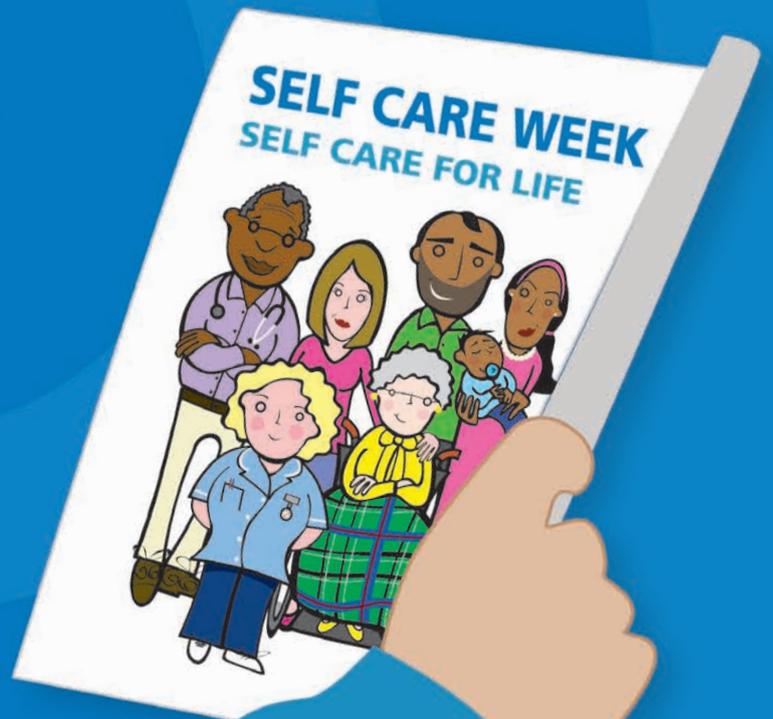


**Successfully Delivering Self Care Week:**

# Case Studies and Practical Advice



# About Self Care Week

**“Self care is vitally important, it is critical for the NHS and its longevity” said then Health Minister Earl Howe, while launching Self Care Week 2014 at the Self Care Forum’s Annual Conference.**

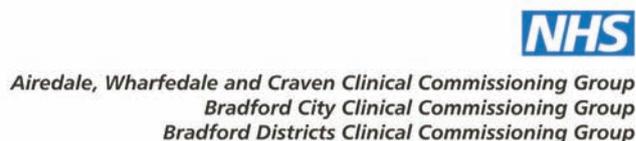
Self Care Week is the national annual campaign to raise awareness of how people can take care of their own health whether it is to prevent disease or illness, understand how to look after minor ailments or how to manage long term conditions.

As organisers of the campaign, the Self Care Forum provides support and resources to patient-facing organisations to use the week as a focus to promote self care and target messages to their patients and population.

The secondary message for Self Care Week is around navigating health services. The Self Care Forum believes there is confusion about how and when to access health services and help is needed to support and educate people to choose the right service for their health needs, whether this is the doctor, nurse, pharmacist or A&E. There are 57m GP consultations and 3.7m A&E visits for self treatable conditions, which illustrates the need for signposting as well as support for people to understand how to look after their symptoms.

Participation in Self Care Week has increased each year with varying degrees of involvement from displaying posters in reception areas, holding self care seminars and organising full-scale self care events. To help provide inspiration for organisations planning to participate in future Self Care Weeks, this report showcases two exemplar Self Care Week campaigns from 2014.

There is no reason why these models of excellence cannot be emulated in every location in the UK and a guide to help with this is on pages 9-10.



# Exemplar Self Care Week Campaign: Bracknell Forest Council and Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group

Realising the benefits that can be reaped from encouraging residents to self care, Bracknell Forest Council and Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group have been jointly organising Self Care Week since 2012. Two years on, and Self Care Week has escalated into the largest health and social care event in the Bracknell Forest calendar.

The 2014 Self Care Week campaign was Bracknell Forest's biggest yet, funded by money from the Better Care Fund scheme. This meant the event could be used to make a huge push to raise awareness about self care.

Co-ordinator of Bracknell Forest's Self Care Week 2014, Matthew Clift, Joint Project Manager for Prevention and Self Care shares his thoughts on running such a panoptic event:

## Joint Funded

"I was recruited in July 2014 and began work on Self Care Week in September 2014" said Matthew whose role is jointly funded by Bracknell Forest Council and Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

## Aim

The aim for Self Care Week 2014 was to reach as many of the 113,000 local population as possible and raise awareness about how people can better look after themselves and improve their health and wellbeing; to offer free NHSHealth Checks; to increase the engagement with men and provide information on what health service should be accessed for particular conditions. Overall, the aim was to increase the levels of reach from Self Care Week 2013.

## Partners

Besides Bracknell Forest Council and Bracknell and Ascot CCG a number of other partners were involved, including Berkshire NHS Healthcare Foundation Trust and Healthwatch Bracknell Forest.

## Pure Self Care

Responsible individual

## Pure Medical Care

Professional responsibility

### THE SELF CARE CONTINUUM



Daily choices



Lifestyle



Self-managed ailments



Minor ailments



Long-term conditions



Acute conditions



Compulsory psychiatric care



Major trauma

Healthy Living

Minor ailments

Long-term conditions

In-hospital care



### Brief Description

A comprehensive programme of activities and events were organised for the duration of Self Care Week. “These were based largely on the Self Care Forum’s continuum of self care” said Matthew who added “we took account of the range of self care from prevention, minor ailments, long term conditions and included mental well being as well as physical health.” The programme included Tai Chi classes, children’s self care poster competitions, Street Doctor and Street Physio, Talking Therapies, mobile health vans and referrals for smoking cessation and weight management support. Besides health, community services such as police and fire and rescue offered advice on staying safe. Matthew added “the health and social care students from the local college were a great help in promoting health messages during the week, and Healthwatch Bracknell Forest produced a poster to help people understand how to access local NHS services.”



### Links

Matthew explained that the campaign’s success relied on participation by local health and business organisations. “We had a wide range of local organisations getting involved such as GP surgeries, children’s centres, leisure centres, schools, cafés, libraries, pharmacies and local businesses.” Forging strong links was key to Self Care Week, Matthew said “it is important to have a good knowledge of who’s who in the local authority, the CCG and other local organisations.” Over 140 locations participated in Bracknell’s Self Care Week although “it was difficult to get everyone rallied,” said Matthew but “it happened by speaking to practice managers, head teachers, and patient participation groups. Self Care Week was added to agendas at council meetings and CCG board meetings as well as Health and Wellbeing Boards.” Matthew also approached local businesses although he found it hard convincing the pharmacy chains of the value in getting involved, “we couldn’t just put a poster up as this had to be agreed by their head office. However, talking to and visiting pharmacies and local businesses are essential to a wide reaching campaign,” he said.



## Promotion

“Previous Self Care Week campaigns didn’t have a strong communications programme,” Matthew explained, “which is why for 2014 there was a concerted effort to improve promotion.” A working group was set up involving communications leads in the local authority, CCG and partner organisations, as well as participating organisations where possible who helped to ensure a community-wide focus on promotion. This meant there was better dissemination of material throughout the community. The CCG sent text messages to 66,000 patients and social media was used extensively to raise awareness before and during the campaign.

Whilst notices were uploaded to websites and sent through electronic newsletters an article in the local media and radio broadcasts meant PR wasn’t over reliant on computers and smart phones and reached those in the community that cannot access new technology.



“The focus for 2015” he said “will be more about having a meaningful conversation with the local community.” Matthew describes a move towards social prescribing which is about offering direct help to people to take care of their own health, by linking them with support services available in the area such as smoking cessation and weight management.



## Evaluation

Questionnaires were used as a measure for all three Self Care Week campaigns explained Matthew. In 2012, 35 questionnaires, which ask about people’s barriers to self care and about local health services, were collected. In 2013 there were 938, however there were 1929 questionnaires collected for Self Care Week 2014. “The health and social care students helped increase these numbers” he said.

Matthew explained how they will be doing things differently for their next Self Care Week, “the questionnaires were a valuable insight as to how services are used and what people do to help themselves, however sometimes the data collection can take over the actual message of the campaign.”



## Finance

Whilst Self Care Week 2012 and 2013 were relatively inexpensive, for 2014 the Better Care Fund meant there was a bigger budget to spend on hiring vans, paying for staff and hiring halls. Matthew said that campaigns can be successful without relying on a large budget, “more important to organising a wide-reaching Self Care Week campaign,” he said “are links in the community.”

He said “Bracknell Forest’s challenge for Self Care Week 2015 is, how to reach as many people as possible, be as meaningful as possible and for the least amount of money.”

# Exemplar Self Care Week Campaign: Self Care Week in Yorkshire

Four enthusiastic women in Yorkshire are the force behind the locality's drive to support the population to look after their health better.

Enid Feather, Clinical Lead for Self care and Prevention at Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group; Collette Connolly, Head of Commissioning (Self-care & Prevention) Bradford Districts and City Clinical Commissioning Group; Tina Butler, Self Care and Prevention Programme Manager at Bradford Council and Kate Farrar, Association Expert from NHS Yorkshire and Humber Commissioning Support Unit organised the area's campaign for Self Care Week 2014.

Three of them explained how they "do" Self Care Week in Yorkshire.



## Joint working

Joint working was thought to be vital to the success of Self Care Week, Tina said "our amazing strength is our multi-agency working", the team works across the council, two Clinical Commissioning Groups as well as Public Health, third sector and the Commissioning Support Unit.

Self care has been part of the locality's work programme since 2012 as a result of the council's Integration of Health and Social Care Programme. The Self Care and Prevention Programme began in May 2013, and a Programme Board and an Expert Reference Group make self care a top priority for 19 local organisations including Health Action Local Engagement (HALE), Community Pharmacy

West Yorkshire and Bradford Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust. The Expert Reference Group and the Self Care and Prevention Board are responsible for planning Self Care Week.



## Aim

The national message of "Self care for life – be healthy this winter" was used as a general theme for Self Care Week 2014 in Yorkshire. Promotion focused on taking care of minor ailments, ensuring medicine cabinets are stocked and managing long term conditions during the winter months. Enid said that there was a push for this because "minor ailments are everybody's business".



## Brief Description

A full programme of over 30 events were organised for the duration of Self Care Week. These took place in GP surgeries, bus stations, shopping centres, libraries and community centres across the district. There were a number of stalls with information and advice and included health trainers who tested people's blood pressure and Sports and Leisure colleagues demonstrating the benefits of exercise. Pharmacy First was promoted

in Keighley Bus Station, and local doctors promoted self care on Bradford Community Broadcasting Radio.

## Bradford Practice Health Champions

Most of the 60 GP practices in the district took part in Self Care Week and Collette enthusiastically praised Bradford's Practice Health Champions who are active volunteers in ten of them. She said "these volunteers run groups and initiatives such as coffee mornings, knit and natter, walking groups etc. All of them participated in Self Care Week 2014."

## Engagement

Whilst Self Care Week 2014 was generally embraced by most health partners in the area, some were harder to persuade, Collette spoke up for the practices with health champions who were enthusiastic and engaged but she said some practice managers are more business focused and don't always see its value. "There is work to do here," she said referring to her and Enid's engagement programmes with practice managers "we have presented at clinical commissioning forums to help them see the benefits of self care." We just have to spell out "what is in it for the practice" said Enid.

For instance, one of the practices, Leylands Medical Practice did a project with local children's centres and primary schools to educate parents and school children about spotting signs of illness. Collette explained that the motivation behind this was managing increasing demand over winter. The practice felt empowering parents with the right information meant they were confident in dealing with their family's illnesses without intervention by the surgery.

## Self care is not "no" care

Most health professionals in the area realise the necessity in doing more to help people help themselves. Demand on health services is increasing; in the last five years in England there has been an estimated 285 million GP consultations and 10 million visits to A&E for minor ailments - such as coughs and colds or muscular pain – at a cost to the NHS of over £10bn.

The Self Care Forum believes more has to be done to help people look after themselves, but, this can be viewed cynically by some people. While raising awareness at Keighley Bus Station about the local "pharmacy first" scheme, Edith said it stimulated a discussion in the bus queue. Some people felt the service was simply to save NHS money. The Self Care Forum is keen to explain that "self care" is not "no care". It is not about leaving people without support, it is about improving people's health literacy and understanding of how to self care in order to avoid preventable diseases, manage long term conditions, and identify and self-treat symptoms safely at home, and to recognise when to seek help by a professional. It is also about knowing who that professional should be.





## Staff

Enid made the point that “while we have to think about the public for Self Care Week, we must also think about the staff.” The Self Care Forum agrees and would encourage all organisations to extend self care messages internally to support the 1.3 million employees across the NHS.

Training staff and partners involved in Self Care Week was also necessary. “We noticed that some of our partners lacked the confidence in approaching members of the public about their health and wellbeing and having a bit of advanced training for volunteers and health professionals is worthwhile,” said Tina.



## Consistency of message

Consistency of message was said to be a problem in Yorkshire. The Self Care Forum believes it is a national issue with different advice being given by different professionals as well as NHS services such as NHS 111. This needs to be addressed and Tina said “for Self Care Week 2015 we will develop post cards with consistent messages to support people to look after their health and wellbeing.”

Some of these messages can be taken from the Self Care Forum’s fact sheets, which were written by Board Member and GP, Dr Knut Schroeder – “we want to pick out some of the useful information for key messages” said Tina who felt, because they were written by a doctor, they were a powerful and reliable resource.



## Planning

Amazingly, work on Self Care Week 2014 happened over just three months, “it is sometimes difficult to get the urgency from partners,” said Collette. It was necessary for Kate to be on top of it the whole time “she has such excellent attention to detail which means she gets things done, and this is what you need.”

On deciding the aim for Self Care Week 2015, Tina said “What we can do smartly for this year is to look at the Self Care Forum’s manifesto for ideas and we can agree these at the planning stage.”

The Self Care Forum’s manifesto to help engage people in their own health was launched at the Self Care Conference in November 2014. The manifesto highlights four areas that are necessary for engagement which include lifelong learning, empowerment, information and local and national health campaigns.





## Amnesty day

It was important to ensure the momentum generated by Self Care Week is not lost once the week is over. Collette said “Self Care Week is like a big bang, there is so much going on.” Enid agreed “there is so much energy that goes into making Self Care Week a success that it is short-sighted to think of it as just a week of activities.” She said it was important to use it as a launch-pad for something else, “to ensure we get the most out of that effort.”

Collette had given this some thought, “we can have a self care amnesty day.” For one day each month, all GP practices could have a self care day with everyone promoting the same message. Practices might realise that it isn’t so difficult to do self care and “they could do self care every day.”



## Finance

Self Care Week did not require “pots of money”. Tina said “sometimes if you have too much money you can be too silly with it.” Instead, they relied on ‘in-kind’ support and used their small budget of less than £1000 to pay for printing material that was “eye catching, consistent and with simple clear messages in the design.”

Having something eye-catching is an important hook to help engage people. Collette said, when promoting Bradford’s Healthy Heart campaign on Valentine’s Day “we had squidgy hearts that helped to start up a conversation with people.” She said it is helpful to have someone with PR and communications expertise on the steering group to provide creative ideas. Tina agreed “we are very excitable people, we have energy and ambition and need someone to turn our infectious bubble of an idea into something practical.”



## Evaluation

It is fair to say that evaluating people’s behavioural change and the impact on local health services after a campaign is difficult, especially after just one week of intervention, but smaller qualitative measurements can be put in place to help inform local self care programmes and strategies going forward.

In Yorkshire the team admitted that “evaluation is our weakness.” This wasn’t to say they didn’t evaluate. People were asked to fill questionnaires during the campaign but, “in the middle of a busy shopping centre it is difficult to get them to stop and fill in forms” said Enid. She added that it is also important to agree the desired outcomes prior to the campaign “we weren’t entirely sure at the beginning about what we wanted and so it was difficult to measure whether we hit the outcomes.”



## Ambition for Self Care

We have great ambition for self care Tina said, “we want to raise the profile and have it embedded into services, pathways and our programmes with our partner organisations to make sure we have consistent messages and we all have the same approach for self care.”



## National Push

When asked how we can raise the profile of the self care message, Collette said “a bigger national push for self care is needed.”

# Guide to Organising Self Care Week:

## Tips on holding your own Self Care Week event:

**Explore the possibility of joint working** with partners such as: the CCG, CSU, local authority, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Healthwatch, Local Pharmacy and Medical Associations.

**Create a self care brand** that can be recognised by the local population – use the Self Care Forum's self care characters.

**Generate publicity** at events by inviting local celebrities and politicians such as the mayor, councillors and MPs to give prizes and awards.

**Find ways to engage** with diverse groups of your population.

### **Devise an engaging programme of self care activities for Self Care Week, here are examples:**

- Work with local businesses to help engage men in their health.
  - Highlight new health services such as Healthy Living Pharmacies
- Invite school nurses to lead a healthy schools project teaching school children about looking after their health.
  - Invite a pharmacist to run self care seminars for common and long term conditions.
  - Hold a coffee morning for parents of young children and invite a nurse to discuss the normal duration and red flags of common childhood ailments.

**Initiate a training session** to ensure everyone is consistent with key messages and confident in approaching and relaying messages to the public during Self Care Week.

**Go where people are** – where footfall is heaviest such as shopping centres, and avoid places where people have limited time such as bus and train stations.

**Enthuse local partners to participate** in Self Care Week by highlighting the benefit to them, for example, increasing footfall in pharmacies, a self care seminar can empower patients and impact positively on consultation rates, a free exercise class could generate potential paying customers.

The Self Care Forum's **Self Care Continuum and manifesto** can help you decide your overall aim.

Use the national **Self Care Week theme** as a hook, and the resources on [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org).

The **Self Care Forum** has an abundance of material, make the most of this and if possible, adapt for a local audience by including relevant logos.

Start planning as **early** as possible.

**Include experts in partner organisations** to help develop a communications plan utilising digital, print and broadcasting mediums to promote Self Care Week. A Self Care Week press release template is available from [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org).

Make the most of any **local facilities** such as libraries, gyms, town halls, community gardens.

**Offer goodie bags** as hooks for conversations, these can include helpful material such as minor ailment fact sheets, health service guides and freebies such as pedometers and water bottles.

**Make the most of information** garnered from questionnaires and agree in advance how it will be used to shape local health provision and improve people's self care behaviour.

**Local businesses can help** by loaning a vehicle for health checks, free use of a hall, space in a supermarket or free exercise classes.



**For resources go to:**

*[www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org)*

**For further information or advice on running events in Self Care Week, please contact Libby Whittaker via email:**

*[libby.whittaker@selfcareforum.org](mailto:libby.whittaker@selfcareforum.org)*

**For the toolkit:**

Go to the “Best Practice” section of the Self Care Forum’s website (*[www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org)*) to see the resources used by Bracknell and Yorkshire for Self Care Week 2014.

The Self Care Forum and  
Self Care Week are supported by:

