Uncovering Hidden Carers:
Transforming Carer Support in Dorset

Introduction

Unpaid carers in Dorset, especially younger individuals, often experience poor health. Many remain unrecognised within health systems. National strategies call for improved identification and support. The challenge was to increase visibility of carers in Primary Care to enable targeted support and reduce health inequalities.

Aim & Methods

To improve identification through consistent coding in Primary Care.
Collaboration between DiiS, Primary Care, and Voluntary and Community Services.
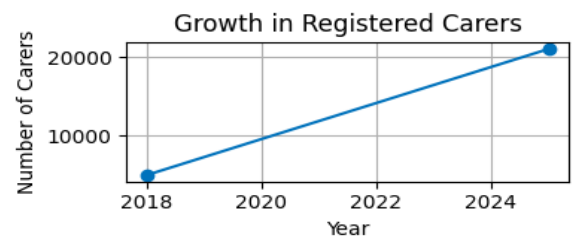Carer Engagement role supported staff building confidence to take proactive steps in recognising carers .
Daily data feeds enabled timely insights. Interactive reports analysed geography, PCNs, and health indicators. This allowed the teams to compare areas with high prevalence of long-term conditions against carer registration rates to support the identification of 'hidden carers' and target support.

Results

Registered carers increased from
5,000 (2018) to 21,000 (2025).
Insights revealed high hypertension rates among carers, informing preventative initiatives like BP@Home.
Carers Week 2025 targeted under-registered areas, helping more individuals recognise their caring role and access support

Growth in Registered Carers

Impact

Embedded proactive carer identification in Primary Care.
DiiS insights enabled targeted health interventions and awareness campaigns.
"DiiS insights have accelerated our approach to finding hidden carers, allowing us to target support where it truly matters." – Participation Development Lead

Lessons Learned

Coordinated action across health and social care is essential.
Standardised coding and data-driven insights empower teams.
Foundation for further work embedding carer identification.

Takeaway Messages

**Data can uncover hidden carers and drive equitable support.
Embedding insights into practice transforms outcomes.
Collaboration is key to sustainable change.**

DiiS — Dorset Intelligence & Insight Service

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NHS Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

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