

A Year at Conexus Healthcare

Celebrating the achievements of local general practices
through the work of Wakefield's GP confederation
June 2020-May 2021

Annual Report 2020-21



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Foreword

I imagine it will be rare to find an annual report written about activities covering any 12-month period during the years 2020 to 2021 that does not start with some kind of reference to what an incredibly challenging year it was, the Covid-19 pandemic has after all affected everyone and every business in the whole country. Some small businesses may have been able to exploit the opportunities that the pandemic presented whilst some have really struggled and many may well have closed without the government investment offered.

Conexus saw an increase in income and activity and improved outcomes and achievements in 2020/21, our work in previous years having positioned us well to step up and support General Practice in the Wakefield district. To say we were ready for anything would be a gross exaggeration, however the agility we had built into our ways of working and the relationships and reputation we had been developing in previous years were a strong foundation for the year we've just been through.

Conexus responded to the pandemic immediately, securing the safety of our staff, ensuring continuity of our clinical service activity and providing free support and training to practices to remain as resilient as possible and continue to provide services to their patients.

Much of the growth detailed in this report was rooted in our Covid responses. Our clinical services team rapidly set up a new site and more than doubled the amount of clinical appointment time available for direct booking by practices.

We mobilised a Covid-19 testing service for the public and a vaccine workforce inside 6 weeks and our training team shifted all training activity online and despite a challenging start, ended the year having delivered more training than ever before.

The evidence from this year clearly shows our success is directly linked to our drive and determination to be reliable, dependable and creative collaborators, committed supporters of our local practices and PCNs and, on their behalf, as valued partners in the local health and care system.

Conexus is a Latin word meaning 'connection; joining together; in combination'. Our work this year stretched us into new connections, deeper and more meaningful partnerships and work to increase the connections between people in the District and better health and wellbeing whether through our services directly or by connecting practice staff to more training and support to enable them to deliver better services.

I have taken great pride this last year in the way in which our staff have remained connected to each other even whilst we mainly worked from home and connected to the people we serve; the staff in practices and PCNs and the patients in the district. It is only as a direct result of their commitment, skills, adaptability and flexible ways of working that Conexus has managed to achieve so much in such a challenging environment.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of their achievements in this report. Thank you for your interest.

Antony Nelson
Managing Director

**Our Mission:**

To ensure the **delivery of high quality, accessible and innovative health and wellbeing services** through a dynamic well trained and developed general practice workforce. To **generate and invest profits for the benefit and in support of general practices and primary care networks (PCNs)** in Wakefield District in order to improve health, wellbeing and patient experience. To **represent the voice, contribution and opportunity for general practice** to play its role in the health and wellbeing of the local population.

**Our Vision:**

As a 'connecting structure', Conexus connects with practices and primary care networks and works collaboratively with them to:

- Make it easier for the local **POPULATION** to connect with high quality services to improve their health & wellbeing.
- Develop & train the **PEOPLE** connected with general practice/primary care.
- Improve the resilience and effectiveness of **PRACTICES** to remain connected to their patients.
- Positively promote primary care within the Wakefield **PLACE** connecting with the West Yorkshire integrated care system.
- Connect with and create strong and positive **PARTNERSHIPS** through collaboration.

**Our Values:**

- Transparency and honesty in all that we do
- Listen to others and collaborate in a spirit of trust
- Deliver great value through quality and innovation
- Proud to grow our business and learn from mistakes
- Share our learning generously to help more practices, patients, and the public
- Develop services, training and partnerships to respond, think and succeed faster
- Cultivate and develop primary care staff, providers and leaders.





Our Strategy 2021+

Provide and support the provision of high-quality accessible services in practices and PCNs.

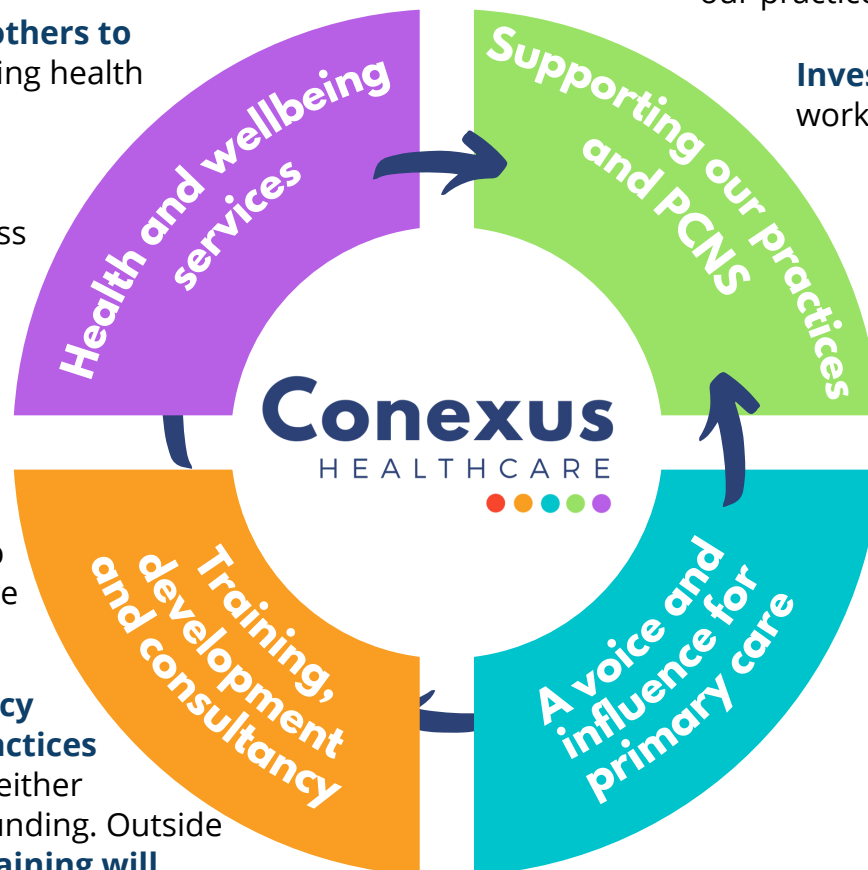
Innovate and support others to innovate to meet changing health priorities.

Provide health and wellbeing services across the Wakefield District.

The **one-stop-shop for Wakefield practices' training needs** that help provide the very best care to local people.

Training and consultancy support in our local practices will be self-sustaining, either through central or self-funding. Outside the Wakefield District, **training will generate a surplus** we will re-invest locally.

An enriching learning experience for all.



Invest profits and external funding into capacity, capability and activities that support our practices and PCNs.

Invest in innovation and new models of workforce and services provision.

Seek opportunities to increase the efficiency and sustainability of practices, acting as a conduit for new and additional income.

Provide and support a single, unified voice for general practice across the Wakefield District.

Gather and represent the views of general practice in the Wakefield District and support practices and PCNs to contribute to priorities in the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and Integrated Care System (ICS).

All contributions be seen and acknowledged as being on behalf and with the authority of general practices in Wakefield District.



Supporting our Practices & PCNs

Wellbeing Fund

In what has been one of the hardest years for General Practice staff, the Wellbeing Fund was a major success. By generating surplus we were able to invest in this initiative to support practice workforce. Each practice received a pot of money to invest in a wellbeing initiative for the benefit of their staff.



£18K wellbeing fund



across 36 practices



supporting 1,200 staff



Homestead Medical Centre

OUTSIDE FURNITURE PICNIC BOX

COFFEE MACHINES

DESK FANS

PERSONALISED MUGS & FLEECES

ICE CREAM VAN

EXERCISE BIKES

KETTLES

MICROWAVES



"All the staff would like to say a huge thank you for these gifts, they are very much appreciated and will give staff the chance to enjoy the fresh air whilst they lunch together."

Lisa Roberts - Lupset Health Centre



Trinity Medical Centre



Stanley Health Centre



New Southgate Surgery



Orchard Croft Medical Centre



Henry Moore Clinic



Friarwood Surgery



Homestead Medical Centre



St Thomas Road Surgery



Homestead Medical Centre



Chapelthorpe Medical Centre



Maybush Medical Centre



New Southgate Surgery



Supporting our Practices & PCNs

Hosting Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

At the start of the Conexus year, we were already hosting a number of staff from Brigantes PCN. In January 2021, we welcomed staff working in the West Wakefield PCN and by the end of our year we were in the final planning stages to transfer staff from Trinity Health Group PCN. In July 2021 we were successfully hosting 36 staff working across 3 PCNs.

To help PCNs build on their existing primary care services and offer more personalised and integrated healthcare to their patients, Conexus has supported PCNs by:

- Transferring the employee liability
- Managing organisational risks
- Providing access to the corporate support infrastructure available within Conexus

Our support gives staff, their managers, clinical directors and practices the best chance to focus on providing care and wellbeing services. When PCNs are supported to work together, they can share resources, provide flexibility, resilience, reduce duplication and improve staff wellbeing. We are currently providing ad-hoc corporate support to one other PCN and envisage this to be a growing business area.



Vaccine Staff Bank

Building on the success of our GP Care sessional workforce bank, Primary Care Networks in the west of Wakefield asked Conexus to engage with volunteers and health and care staff to support delivery of the vaccine centre programme at two vaccine centres: Sandal RUFC and St Swithuns Eastmoor.

The vaccine staff bank has supported the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines across the west of Wakefield, operating 7 days a week.

We recruited staff from local practices and the general public to boost the vaccine workforce. Over 120 volunteers, vaccinators, non-registered vaccinators, admin staff, marshalls and site supervisors joined the team.



Freedom to Speak up Guardian

At the height of the pandemic we launched this service to provide a single shared point of contact for staff employed across all practices in Wakefield. This gives staff a safe space to highlight areas of concern and seek advice and guidance to keep themselves, their colleagues and patients safe.

Supporting our Practices & PCNs

COVID-19 Testing Service

To support general practices in Wakefield, we worked together with local partners to provide a rapid response to the pandemic. We supported key workers across the Wakefield district who were unable to access the national testing programme.

General practices in Wakefield were offered asymptomatic PCR testing every fortnight. We delivered tests on their request and this allowed them to maintain the safety of their teams and continue to provide services to patients.



The service worked in partnership with community hubs to support vulnerable people by helping them access PCR testing whilst they were isolating.





Health & Wellbeing Services

GP Care Extra

NHS Wakefield CCG asked us to extend our usual Evening and Weekend service in November 2020, to quickly support our practices as they continued to navigate their way through the pandemic and began to mobilise the vaccine programme.

Between Nov 2020 and June 2021 GP Care Extra provided...



4,684 extra telephone consultations for Wakefield patients.



213 extra routine face to face consultations.



553 appointments in our red hubs for patients with suspected Covid-19.

In just over 2 weeks the Clinical Services Team...



Opened a new site at Elizabeth Court Surgery in Castleford on the East of the District.



Set up a second red hub to provide safe face to face assessments for patients with suspected Covid-19 symptoms.



Developed a flexible model that allowed us to switch the type of support available to meet the needs of patients on the day.



Increased GP Care opening times by an extra 30 hours per week.



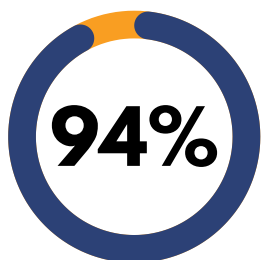
Added over 120 extra hours of GP appointments per week to support our practices and patients.



Health & Wellbeing Services

GP Care - Evening and Weekend Clinics feedback

Friends & Family feedback for GP Care is now obtained via an online form.



of patients who responded said they were extremely likely or likely to recommend GP Care.



"This service is much needed, and I would certainly tell people about it. It saved me waiting another 3 days before I could talk to a GP."

Feedback from Practices and PCNs

"As a practice we have found this service incredibly useful. I think as a lifeline when things go pear-shaped (usually due to unexpected staff illness/isolating or sudden excessive demand) its been invaluable."

GP Practice

"GP Care Extra is an essential contribution to GP resilience and support."

PCN Clinical Director

GP Care Wakefield is delivered by a team of local practice staff who work on a sessional basis for Conexus. When asked about their experience of working for GP Care, many of the team commented on how they felt supported and listened to.



of our workers would recommend working in GP Care.



Health & Wellbeing Services

Cancer Screening

- After a short pause due to the pandemic, smear tests were restarted in GP Care Wakefield Evening & Weekend Clinics in Aug 2021. We increased the number of clinics available, helping our practices catch up and making appointments more accessible for those who work during the day.
- Working with Public Health and Yorkshire Cancer Research we have also been exploring ways we can support our practice teams to increase the uptake of bowel cancer screening.



670 patients attended a cytology appointment at GP Care between June 2020 and May 2021.

Supporting the Urgent Care System



This year our practices and urgent care partners directly accessed over **21,000** consultations in GP Care via remote booking.



Almost **11,000** direct referrals were received from NHS 111.



Worked with the A&E team to offer patients a **GP Care appointment** instead of waiting in A&E



Training and Consultancy

Delivering Tailored Training

We have supported Primary Care teams in Wakefield and across the country by delivering tailored, high quality and accessible training throughout the pandemic. We continue to receive positive feedback about both the experience of learning with us and the impact that our training has on student's day-to-day work with patients.



Between June 2020 and May 2021



The team provided **300** training sessions in the year.



To over **3,000** learners across England and Wales.



In a single day we can now simultaneously deliver training in **Brighton, the Black County and Bury!**

"I do thank Conexus for being so adaptable to the current climate and finding ways to make it work."

Feedback from a learner studying on the SPQ during the first lockdown, July 2020



Training and Consultancy

A Successful Year of Training

Supporting receptionists

Delivering well-being, resilience and other essential skills training at a time of enormous pressure on the frontline of general practice.

154
sessions to

1012
receptionists



Equipping more Social Prescribing Link Workers

Developing knowledge and skills through our online qualification.

Increased number of SPQ students by

83%



Delivering FREE training to Wakefield practices

As part of the Conexus commitment to support local practice resilience and workforce development.

129
free sessions for

1852
clinical and non
clinical practice staff



Training the vaccinators

Rapidly increasing the pool of trained staff available to deliver the COVID -19 vaccination programme in Wakefield.

8
new vaccinator
training sessions for

83
participants in 6
weeks.



Training and Consultancy

Training Feedback



"They were really informative and helped so much and I found them funny, which is exactly what has been needed in this pandemic. If there were more courses like this it would be great, thank you for the support and ideas"

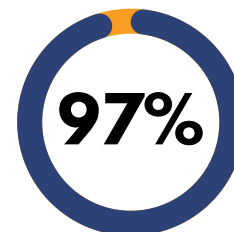
**Receptionist wellbeing session
March 2021**

"Conexus have tried to deliver the best possible course that is thorough and to give us amazing skills and knowledge to gain the qualification."

Student on Social Prescribing Qualification July 2020

"Our nursing workforce is lucky that Conexus could work with the CCG to provide such a holistic plethora of nursing appropriate training in such a professional and organised manner."

**Nurse Consultant (General Practice)
NHS Wakefield CCG**



of learners rated our courses good or very good.



strongly agreed or agreed our courses were delivered in an engaging way.



strongly agreed or agreed the session tutor was knowledgeable.



strongly agreed or agreed that the course was well organised.



of learners said they would change what they do or felt more able to do something as a result of attending training.



Representing Primary Care within the System

Workforce Resilience

We've continued to work with system partners to meet the needs of our workforce as a result of this pandemic. This included working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document to help understand how we're going to address those needs.

As a result, staff in practices have been better able to meet the needs of their patients through greater knowledge and understanding of service changes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Statement

Conexus adopted a statement setting out how it will focus on equality, diversity and inclusion working in collaboration with health and care partners.

Wakefield Health and Care Workforce Hub

We contributed to developing, maintaining and sharing the wellbeing initiatives hosted on this hub acting as an interface between practices and the Workforce Project Management Office. Staff and leaders in General Practices were able to contribute to and receive benefit from the range of wellbeing initiatives.

Wakefield Research Collaborative



In November 2020 we joined system partners to establish a research site for the **PROVENT Covid-19 antibody study** in Wakefield, representing primary care and facilitating GP engagement.



Provided **100 hours of primary care research** nurse time through our bank, to support delivery of the PROVENT trial.



Shortlisted with our partners in the Clinical Team category of the PharmaTimes International **Clinical Researcher of the Year award 2021**.



Joined the **Wakefield Research Hub** which aims to build Research capacity across the Wakefield system and bring more opportunities for collaboration on research studies across Primary and Secondary care.



Employed a **Research Nurse** to support our member practices with research and increase research activity in primary care.



Developing our Workforce

New Roles within Conexus

We went from 21 staff to 58 by the end of the Conexus year with new roles created in HR, Research and Communications and Marketing, as well as hosting new roles within Primary Care Networks. Our workforce and our expertise continues to expand as our business grows.

Growing our internal expertise has meant we are better prepared to support our growing workforce and provide advice, guidance and support to leaders in practices and PCNs across the District.

Apprenticeships

Throughout the year we remained committed to developing new staff through the apprenticeship route, all our Business Admin Apprentices made excellent progress and at the end of the year we had firm plans in place to retain their skills in substantive roles. We extended our support to the apprenticeship model recruiting new apprentices in different parts of the business including plans for nurse associate apprentices in PCN roles.

Developing a Flexible Workforce

This year has seen us grow our sessional workforce. By matching vacant shifts with available staff we have not just been able to support practice resilience and the vaccine roll out, but also provided opportunities for staff to work in different settings and gain new skills.



106 active sessional workers on our bank at the end of May 2021.



Helped **14 practices** fill over **50 shifts** in the first 5 months of 2021.



Filled **1,806** shifts across 2 vaccine centres with sessional staff employed by Conexus.



Provided over **8,000** hours from our bank of sessional workers to the vaccine centres.



Conexus Healthcare Ltd
c/o Sandal Castle Medical Centre
Asdale Road
Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 7JE
United Kingdom

<https://conexus-healthcare.org/>

