



TARGETING SHORT BREAK CARERS FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS

... working for disabled children ...

To plan a communications strategy you need to consider the following;

- **Objectives** for your organisation and identifying gaps and needs
- **Audiences** – you will need to target
- **Messages** for each audience
- **Tools and activities** appropriate to reaching those audiences
- **Resources and Timescales**
- **Evaluation** and Amendment

*(See **Developing a Communications Strategy** and **What Works in Advertising and Publicity** and **Running a Campaign** on our website)*

Your communications activity is not an end in itself but should serve and needs of your organisation. It will be helpful to identify gaps in your current carers coming forward; whether there are there groups of children not currently being served and whether this is due to a lack of diversity in your carers. This will help you identify target audiences for potential carers. Or you may need to recruit around the needs of a particular child.

If you mostly have middle class white women and are relying on word of mouth and are featuring only these in your campaigns you should not be surprised to find few Asian women, young people or men are applying to be carers! To meet the needs of families and disabled children in your community and to diversity your carer base you cannot rely on getting more of the same.

AUDIENCES

You will need to identify key audiences who you need to target who may not necessarily be attracted by your more generic publicity campaign. Examples could be;

- o Men
- o Asian carers
- o Black carers
- o People with experience of complex health
- o People with experience of disability
- o People with experience of autism
- o Young people

KEY MESSAGES

It is good practice to try and get three messages across consistently but sometimes you need to have different key messages for different audiences. The main thing you want people to do is to realise you are wanting people like them to come forward.

For example if you are doing a campaign to recruit contract carers and family link carers for children with autism you might want have an overall message which is about the need for more carers for children with autism but to target the general public you may want to get across that children with autism and rewarding to care for and work with and that you will provide you with the skills and training people need to do this. When targeting those with experience of autism to become contract carers you may be communicating with those who have 'been already bitten by the bug of autism', and need to focus on the advantages of this type of work e.g. you are working at home, pay and conditions.

A poster saying "We need you" with a picture of an Asian woman and child gives a very clear message that Asian carers are needed.

TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

Once you have identified your audiences and the messages you want to get across you will need to identify the tools and activities that are most appropriate to communicating them. These will be suggested by your audiences, messages, or a combination of the two.

Here are some examples of tools and activities for different audiences

Black and minority ethnic carers

- o Use pictures of Black and minority ethnic families and children in your targeted literature for example
- o Community development – make links with Black and minority ethnic communities via existing organisations and leaders. To read more get A Process for Change (free from Short Breaks Network for potage only)
- o Advertise consultation events – talk to families about what they need and what you can offer them – put on activities and crèches to facilitate the process
- o Hold family events with activities and crèche to ask families what they need
- o Do talks or have a stall at community events

Young People

- o online advertising e.g. Gumtree, the Guardian, Do-it.org.uk
- o advertise pay and experience the experience it will give young people
- o target teachers running social work and health courses
- o posters in universities and colleges

People with experience

- o adverts in specialist publications, intranet and payslips
- o posters on staff notice boards and organisations where people work with carers
- o press work – regular postings in staff magazines and council publications and websites
- o word of mouth – ask those you work with to Tell a Friend and give them the resources to do this – posters, postcards, DVDs to do talks etc.
- o write to carers to see if they might be interested in being linked with another child
- o send pen profiles of children needing carers to staff and carers
- o approach teaching assistants and those who work with children

Male Carers

- o promote word of mouth and involve men at all stages of recruitment and training,
- o feature men in all literature
- o run press campaigns saying you need more men to come forward featuring a male carer backed up by literature featuring men

TIMESCALES AND RESOURCES

You will need to have a 12 month detailed plan and a more general longer term plan. Ideally have one person whose responsibility it is to deliver this plan.

You will need to take into account timing when considering your audiences for example if you are holding events trying to attract Black and minority ethnic carers you will need to avoid times of festivals etc, if trying to attract members of general public to get them interested in looking after children with autism – a press campaign in Autism Awareness Week might be topical and successful. If looking to attract young people for holiday play schemes you will need to consider how much in advance you want to advertise so they are ready to start in the holidays.

Evaluation and Amendment

Make sure you keep records of what works and how people heard about – remember although people say word of mouth this might be only one of a variety of things that have worked so don't just offer people a tick box option – talk to them. Keep records of how many enquiries you get after campaigns. Use this information to tailor and improve your strategy as you go along.

Resources

- o Short Breaks Network has a range of tools; resources and advice in our online Recruitment Resource Centre to help you target different groups (photos, illustrations, DVDs and films featuring different types of carers) for more advice go to the Running a Campaign and Recruitment Resources sections of our website.
- o There are also a range of photos and illustrations of different types of carers which you can use for free from our photolibrary (contact clare.plumridge@shortbreaksnetwork.org.uk)
- o CWDC have a range of short break carer studies including disabled carers, Black and minority ethnic carers, gay and lesbian carers.
- o There are a number of publications and other resources available to help you target different carers – visit our Recruitment Resources section of the website.
- o Here is a list of links to short films which feature different types of carers.

http://www.youtube.com/user/sharedcarenetwork#p/u/1/VWBw5_PGBDw
introduction to the range of short breaks featuring carers from different backgrounds doing different types of short breaks

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnVKy0pW4dE&feature=related>

Family-based (family link) carer /Black carer

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc946NMmH_M&feature=related

Befrienders (young people)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0wQCU9eL_U&feature=related

Contract carer for children with complex healthcare needs (family based)

<http://www.youtube.com/user/sharedcarenetwork#p/u/1/QUBu2t1rp0g>

Male Contract carer for teenagers with autism (family-based)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_jogYQFDSA&feature=related

Asian sitter

<http://www.youtube.com/user/sharedcarenetwork#p/u/2/tmo1H826-Bc>

Residential workers including men providing short breaks

<http://www.youtube.com/user/sharedcarenetwork#p/u/16/XO0B2J6dQw4>

Outreach workers providing short breaks

http://www.youtube.com/user/sharedcarenetwork#p/u/3/u_VL4gQPnTU

Inclusion Workers helping children access universal services

For more information and resources go to

www.shortbreaksnetwork.org.uk