

SPHERE

School for Public
Health Environments
Research at Exeter

Topping the Market – Bringing Health & Care Services to Farmers

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University
of Exeter



Job Advert

- **Working hours:** 65 hours per week average (up to 100 hours per week in busy periods)
- **Pay:** £18,500 to over £100,000 p.a. - depending upon:
 - Location
 - Weather
 - Climate
 - Disease outbreak
 - Input cost fluctuations
 - Government policies
 - Geopolitical shocks
 - Tariffs
 - Taxes
 - Consumer demand
 - Global market price fluctuations



Job Advert

Benefits:

- No pension
- No Sick pay
- No paid leave – holiday/bereavement/carers
- No childcare support
- No medical/life/disability insurance
- No reward or incentive schemes
- No flexible working
- No cover
- No CPD – all training self funded
- No PPE provided must be purchased from own wages
- Unsociable hours



Job Advert

• **Working Environment:** Outside predominantly and office based.
With exposure to:

- All Weathers
- Sub zero & high temperatures
- High levels of UV
- Zoonotic diseases
- Chemicals
- Dust
- Machinery
- Lone working
- Manual handling
- Animals



Job Advert

- **Additional tasks:** You will also be expected to complete lengthy and complex funding applications, keep detailed records, using a variety of platforms, apps and portals, completing mapping exercises and being prepared with all records and evidence in case of audit.
- **Accommodation:** Often on-site accommodation is available but security of housing is linked directly with performance.
- **Contract:** Lifetime contract – Average job role age is 60-65 years old. Your contract extends well beyond expected retirement age.



Employee Retention

- 51% of British farmers are considering leaving the industry, due to mounting financial, environmental and mental health pressures.
- Farming is the foundation of Britain's food system, and its importance to our economy and national food security cannot be overstated
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of farmers and their families is critical for building and maintaining a resilient farming sector and a secure food system in the UK.

How many of you would like to apply?



The truth behind the needs of the farming community

- Individuals in skilled agricultural trades have a suicide risk 1.7 times higher than the national average, while those in elementary agricultural occupations face nearly double the risk.
- Agricultural workers are at a significantly higher risk for musculoskeletal disorder, with incidence rates 2.3 times greater than in other sectors.
- Women in agriculture, particularly those aged 25–44, report higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to their male counterparts.
- A 2024 survey by the Farm Safety Foundation revealed that 91% of British farmers consider poor mental health the “biggest hidden problem” in the sector.



The Livestock Market

- The livestock auction market acts as a central hub around which livestock farmers plan their time
- Farmers visit the market weekly to sell stock, socialise with other farmers from the community and get much needed advice and support
- The livestock market therefore provides a unique opportunity to base important healthcare services and provide early action to prevent health problems in this population



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Project 1: Improving access to prevention for farmers

- The local PCN instigated monthly blood pressure and blood sugar checks at Holsworthy Livestock market
- This provided an opportunity for experimenting with new modes of integration and delivery of preventive programming in the Holsworthy farming community
- Project 1 researched the preventive service needs of this population and developed the partnerships needed to execute future work



Project 2: Test and learn intervention

This project aims to test and evaluate a pilot programme offering a tailored healthcare service for farmers and promoting greater awareness and uptake of health services via public opinion leaders (i.e., influential people within the farming community) at Holsworthy Livestock Market



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Market Nurse

The market nurse began work at the Holsworthy livestock market in January 2026 for 12-months, they will be:

- Providing weekly clinics on market days for health checks, reviews, support and referrals. No appointment needed.
- Coordinating specialist services and screenings at the market or other local venues



Community Navigator

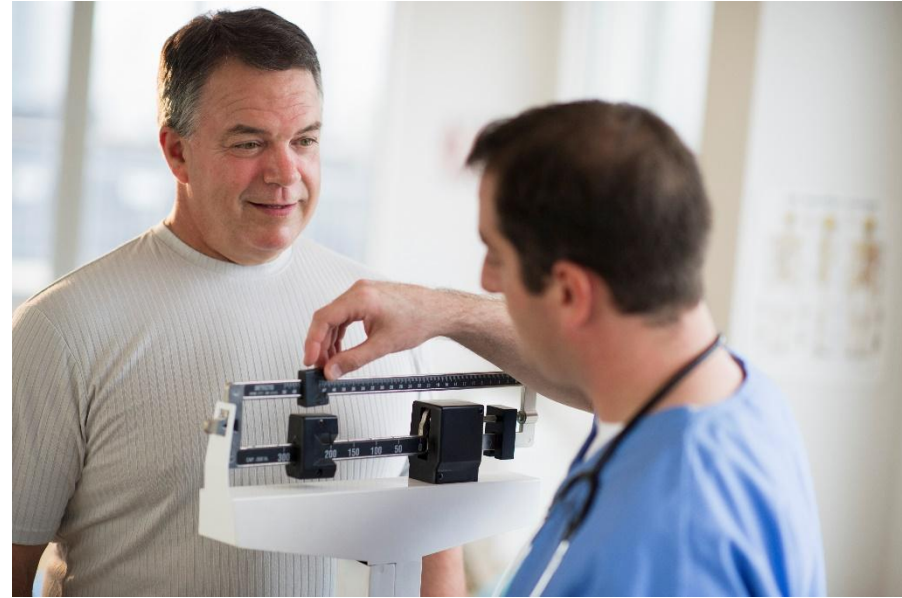
The project's Community Navigator began in September 2025 they are:

- Liaising with local service providers, CVS, charities, local authorities and medical practitioners to create a 12-month programme of clinics and events across health and wellbeing at the market
- Providing referrals and signposting to appropriate services
- Being a recognised contact within the market and advocating the services



Healthcare Assistant and Advocates

- The Health Care Assistant (HCA) will still be providing monthly blood pressure and blood sugar checks at Holsworthy Livestock market
- In addition to the nurse, community navigator, & HCA - **local opinion leaders** (advocates) will be used to influence farmers beliefs and attitudes surrounding help-seeking to address some of the key initial access barriers and encourage uptake of the health services.



PPIE – Feedback Group

- A PPIE Feedback Group will be informing the research process to ensure it is relevant and impactful.
- Founder members and a chairperson from the farming community have been established
- A founding meeting and two participatory workshops have already been held



- Since starting in 2023 data shows that the market health hub has seen just under 700 patients.
- Of these just over 100 patients have received a BP referral.
- Just under 30 have required a diabetic referral.
- For all those patients alcohol status, height, weight and smoking status has been recorded.



COAST & COUNTRY

at Holsworthy Livestock Market in 2025
at the Market Café on Wednesdays:

January 22 nd	July 23 rd
February 19 th	August 20 th
March 19 th	September 17 th
April 23 rd	October 15 th
May 21 st	November 19 th
June 18 th	December 17 th

Coast & Country Primary Care Network staff, from local practices, are offering a number of free checks to monitor your health and to keep you fit and active.

- * BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK
- * BLOOD SUGAR TEST
- * HEIGHT & WEIGHT

 A 3D rendered white figure of a person standing on a small white base, holding a large, bright red question mark.


Healthcare where you are



Stories from the field

“If you hadn’t been there when you were, there’s no doubt I would have taken the gun to my head”

“I never bothered to have my flu and covid vaccine before now, but you explained the benefits and because you were there at the time, it was convenient, but I would never have come into the surgery for a booked clinic – I just don’t have time.”

“I trust you because you speak in my language and do not make me feel stupid as I ain’t got time to try and work out what jargon means”

“I wondered why I kept having so much chest pain. As it goes, you identified I had pretty high blood pressure which apparently could have caused me to have a heart attack, now on some medication and feeling right as rain!”



Improving access to preventive health services in the farming community



2 NHS Awards

Regional and national recognition



Co-produced with 8+ partners

Farmers, NHS and voluntary sector



£20k additional funding secured

Barclays Bank Rural Health Summit



Future research investment

£1.8m NIHR Work & Health Award

Recognition and Influence

- Dedicated national NHS showcase presentation highlighting the project as an exemplar of place-based care
- Interest from Cornish Mutual Insurers to explore expansion of the model to additional livestock markets across the South West
- £20,000 philanthropic funding secured from Barclays Bank to convene a Rural Health Summit
- Interest from clinicians across England and Scotland seeking to understand and learn from the model
- Media interest: BBC Spotlight and Countryfile



Winner - 'Working Together Differently', South West Integrated Care Awards

Regional Champion - 'Improving Health Outcomes', NHS Excellence Awards

(awaiting to hear if we are National Champions; 10th June in Manchester)

Partnership & Co-production

Co-produced with:

- Farmers and farming families
- Kivells, Holsworthy
- Farming Community Network
- NHS partners (Coast and Country PCN, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly ICB, Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)
- Imagine If (community organisation)

Public involvement throughout:

- Three stakeholder workshops
- Service model designed from community priorities
- Ongoing feedback shaping implementation
- Partnerships established through the project are informing the NIHR Work and Health full application and future programme of work



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Changing lives through place-based care

Several individuals have credited the service with saving their lives.

Without intervention at the market, many would have not engaged with health services or accessed timely support.

What next?

- If the test and learn intervention is successful, can we scale it up and apply it to other markets across the region?
- Beyond the livestock market – how do we reach other members of the farming community who are in need of easier access to healthcare services but do not attend livestock markets?
- Can we look at the health impacts of other factors, such as policy and occupational health provision in rural professions?
- Currently progressing a full stage application to the NIHR Work & Health Award (£1.8 million; 3-year project)



Thank you for listening!

With thanks to our collaborators:

- Centre for Rural Policy Research, University of Exeter
- Exeter Collaboration for Academic Primary Care (APEX), University of Exeter
- Country and Coast Primary Care Network
- Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care System
- Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Health Innovation South West
- Imagine If
- Farming Community Network
- Kivells, Holsworthy Livestock Market
- Mrs Susan Banks, peer researcher

