



## **FarmFit Newsletter Update - March 2025**

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### **What is FarmFit?**

FarmFit was launched in October 2023 at Wooler Mart as part of the Well Up North initiative, aimed at tackling health inequalities within our network. Through our work, we identified the rural and farming communities as a large and vital part of our population. However, we also recognised the unique challenges and health disparities they face.

Farmers and rural families often experience difficulties in accessing healthcare due to their demanding schedules, seasonal work, and isolation. Whether it's lambing, harvest, or unpredictable weather conditions, farmers frequently struggle to find the time to attend medical appointments. If the weather permits, they may only be able to attend during a brief window, but by the time they know it, appointment slots are already filled. Additionally, long working hours and the need to care for livestock leave little time for personal health.

The isolation faced by farming families, especially in geographically remote areas, further complicates access to healthcare. This project aims to support these communities in overcoming those barriers and improving their overall health.

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### **Who is Behind FarmFit?**

FarmFit is led by Karen Wood, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner at Alnwick Medical Group, where she has worked since 2017. Before this, Karen served as a Community Matron within the Alnwick area.

Karen has a personal connection to the farming community as both a farmer's daughter and wife, understanding first-hand the challenges faced by this unique group. Her passion for supporting the health needs of farming families and rural communities is the driving force behind FarmFit.

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### **What We Offer at FarmFit:**

FarmFit provides a variety of health services directly at the farms and rural locations to meet the needs of this busy and hardworking population. These services include:

- **Health Checks**
- **Blood Pressure (BP) Monitoring**
- **NHS Health Checks** (including blood tests upon request)
- **Minor Illness and Medication Advice**
- **Lifestyle and Diet advice**
- **Wound Care on occasions**
- **Pill Reviews/Contraception/Sexual Health**

Recently, we have expanded our services to Acklington Mart to be more inclusive to all members of our network. Carry Horrocks, another Advanced Nurse Practitioner, will now be handling the Acklington Mart sessions, while Karen will continue to run the monthly FarmFit sessions at Wooler Mart. Together, we will offer FarmFit sessions at both locations every month.

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### **How We Support the Farming Community:**

At FarmFit, we enter patient data directly into the medical records, ensuring continuity of care. Whenever possible, we address health concerns on the spot, providing immediate advice or treatment. One of our key aims is to build rapport with farmers and their families, encouraging them to visit their GP when necessary for important health checks, mental health support, and long-term condition management.

Feedback from patients has been overwhelmingly positive, and we have seen a real improvement in health engagement within the farming community.

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### **Who Can Access FarmFit?**

FarmFit is open to anyone in the farming or rural communities who needs assistance with their health. Whether you're a farmer, a family member, or simply someone living in a remote area, we encourage you to take advantage of this free service. Share this information with your friends and family, and feel free to stop by either Wooler Mart or Acklington Mart on our scheduled days.

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### **Stay Healthy, Stay Strong:**

FarmFit is here to make healthcare accessible to all, especially for those in rural and farming communities who face unique challenges. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming sessions!

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For more information or to schedule a visit, please contact us or speak to a member of the FarmFit team at your next session.

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*FarmFit is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of farming communities. Together, we can break down barriers to healthcare and support our hardworking farmers and their families.*

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