



Care home receives 'outstanding' CQC rating

A CARE home in Stockton-on-Tees, which has embraced the use of NEWS to monitor its residents, has achieved an outstanding rating from the CQC.

Improving the health for people living in long term residential care has been a key priority of NHS Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and both Stockton and Hartlepool Local Authorities as part of their Better Care Fund Plans.

The Better Care Fund Plans have provided significant investment across the older persons care home sector with residents now benefitting from an improved method of monitoring their health through digital technology initiatives.

Funding for this initiative has seen the creation of the 'North Tees and Hartlepool Education Alliance' (NTHEA) which comprises of a partnership between North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, Stockton Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council and Alice House Hospice.

One of the local residential homes who use the NEWS system is The White House in Stockton-on-Tees. Nikki Brown, Manager at The White House, has stated that the training provided by the NTHEA has had a large impact on achieving the CQC outstanding rating for the home.

Senior care worker at The White House, Holly Golt, said: "The training was great. It's very easy to follow the NEWS process and as part of the training, we all did an assessment on actual residents of The White House.

"We use NEWS all the time. We do a monthly assessment which gives us a baseline for every resident, so we can immediately tell if there are any changes in their condition we need to be aware of. We alert the community matrons if the NEWS system is telling us there is a problem, and they offer us advice on what to do next. It means we don't end up calling out a doctor for no reason or going to hospital when we don't need to. But if there is a problem, we're all so much more confident in dealing with it properly."

These kinds of project are now happening all over the country and project leads from all across England have now agreed 3 principles for taking this work forward:

1. There should be a focus on education about deterioration focusing on the 'soft signs' which people can display when becoming unwell.
2. We should all use the NEWS2 tool for measuring deterioration as it is now used across the NHS in England.
3. We should all use a structured way of communication to get the information across properly. This is likely to be SBAR as it is also used nationally within the NHS.

The in-depth case studies, publications and learning from the North East and North Cumbria can be found here:

- WCCH case study: <http://bit.ly/WCCHCaseStudy>
- NEWS study: <http://bit.ly/NEWSStudy>
- Event publication, plus quick guide of learning: <http://bit.ly/WCCH-NENC>

The programme will run until March 2021 and will continue to support the evaluation of the impact of the projects and strive to make future innovation and connectivity to enhance the care people receive.

Is your resident unwell? tool set to transform care home communication. A NEW tool developed by regional experts will help care home staff recognise signs of their residents being unwell.

The tool – called 'Is your resident unwell?' – has been developed by the Well Connected Care Homes (WCCH) programme, which aims to significantly improve communication between care homes and the external health environment.

Members of the WCCH Regional Steering Group formed a subgroup to share ideas around developing a regional communication tool for residents in care homes. They came together on a few occasions to consider ideas and the correct approach to take in creating this tool.

The group was made up of representatives from Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, the Academic Health Science Network for the North East and North Cumbria, North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Health Call, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, Sunderland University and Ace Training.

Assessment tools such as Stop and Watch; Frailty – Recognising End of Life and Escalating Deterioration (FREE); Restore2 and Significant 7 were all looked at and reviewed by the subgroup. Even though some parts of the tools were considered useful, they were not considered entirely satisfactory for what it was felt was needed and in what would bring about cultural change in the region.

From these discussions, the group developed the idea of an 'Is your resident unwell?' communication tool. It is hoped the communication tool will assist staff in recognising signs and in recording a set of observations - and a further aspiration is that it could be incorporated into the system and will be something that all care home staff in the North East and North Cumbria region will use.

The tool will be launched at an event on 4 March 2020 at the Durham Centre. Delegates will include a cross section of staff and managers from various care homes from across the region as well as commissioning managers/leads and NHS community matrons.

A member of the steering group said: "We're delighted with the response we have received to the launch event and to see the cross section of people attending - they are exactly the people we are trying to reach. We're confident it will be a good launch and only hope to get a favourable response to the tool."





Digital care home technology helps reduce hospital admissions

A DIGITAL assessment tool is empowering care home staff in Sunderland to detect and act on resident concerns, in turn helping to reduce hospital admissions and lessen the financial burden on the NHS.

The tool, 'NEWS', is transforming the way staff in care homes are working and revolutionising the communication across services which is radically improving patient care.

Following the implementation of NEWS, the care home staff are now more empowered in detecting and escalating resident concerns following a NEWS assessment with digital technology.

There is now a greater awareness of the importance of this project and data has more than doubled. This shows stakeholder engagement, a switch in mindset and working across the city, is helping to keep residents safe. As a result, there is less hospital admissions which has a positive impact on the financial burden on the NHS.

Commenting on the project, a care home manager said: "It is a useful resource...you can look at a resident and think 'they're not quite right, but I don't know why'. It seems silly phoning a doctor to say...'they're just not themselves', but if you've done their NEWS and their NEWS is indicating something, you can obviously relay that information to the GP and say, 'their score is normally this, but it's gone up to this so there is obviously something going on somewhere'."

Later this year, the project leads will attend and speak at the King's Congress in London to raise further awareness around this successful project. Currently, there is further evaluation being undertaken to explore the benefits of the digital technology and NEWS in care homes.

Find out more about the Well Connected Care Homes (Sunderland) project in this film which features care home staff talking about their experiences: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_1qmcjQ05c

Innovative digital care home technology reduces hospitals admissions

Health Call's Digital Care Home service is reducing hospital admissions and improving patient care across County Durham.

Following a successful pilot and the continuing roll out of the innovative digital technology, care home staff and residents in the region are already seeing a range of benefits in relation to efficiencies and improved care.

The service was developed as a solution to a problem highlighted by care home staff, who wanted a quicker and more effective way to make referrals for community health services, and health and social care partners, who wanted to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions.

Initially developed by County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust working with Health Call Solutions, Durham Dales Health Federation and care home staff, Health Call Digital Care Home (HCDCH) was piloted in one care home over a four-month period. The pilot was successful and using feedback from the care home, both the system and processes were improved before wider roll out began.

With nearly 50% of care homes using HCDCH, there has been a reduction of two hospital admissions per month, per care home. Care home staff have reported spending less time on the phone which enables more time to be spent with residents providing direct care.

Due to its success, full roll out by 31 March 2021 will be followed by expansion into other care settings such as extra care.

A care home manager said: "Practice pre-Health Call was quite stressful in navigating through telephone systems, relying on messages/information being put through was inconsistent and often problematic. Time was consumed making frequent phone calls between specific hours which were quite regimented and restrictive."

Health Call Digital Care Home is only scratching the surface of the potential of supporting care staff and patients in both care homes and other settings such as extra care. The use of digital does not take away from direct care but ensures that the right information is received by the right people ensuring the best care is provided.

Health Call is a unique regional collaboration of NHS organisations, which aims to make the use of clinically led digital solutions part of mainstream delivery of health and social care.

For more information go to www.nhshealthcall.co.uk

Health Call Digital Care Home: what is it and how does it work?

The Health Call Digital Care Home Service is a unique technology that allows care home staff to refer patient details to clinical teams using a secure portal, such as a website or app.

A key feature within the service is the SBAR tool (situation, background, assessment and recommendation) which enables staff to provide clinical observations such as; blood pressure, oxygen saturation and provide details of their concerns.

The system calculates the NEWS2 score based on the information provided which in turn allows the home to provide a high-quality referral and gives the clinical staff the ability to triage and better manage their caseloads. All information is pulled through into the electronic patient record making this available to the wider health system.

The benefits of the Digital Care Home Service are vast, ranging from improved satisfaction with residents feeling better cared for and more involved in their care, reassurance for families and care home staff feeling more empowered.

There are also wider cost saving benefits thanks to the reduced hospital admissions (two per month, per care home), and a 30% reduction in Advanced Nurse Practitioner visits compared to an increase in homes where Health Call Digital Care Home has not been deployed.

The digital technology also brings service efficiencies including freeing up care home staff from lengthy phone calls, allowing them to spend more time with their residents and also reductions in the number of times a care home manager is called out when a resident is unwell. In addition, clinical staff are able to triage referrals and better manage their caseloads and provide the right care to the right person at the right time.

But what do those using Health Call Digital Care Home have to say?

A Community Staff Nurse in the Dales locality said: "Before Health Call as nurses we did not know what we were walking into, we just had been informed the patient was unwell. We now have good observational measurement and an outline from carers describing signs and symptoms."

An Advanced Nurse Practitioner in the Dales locality said: "The background information, such as how long the patient has been unwell, is invaluable. It helps us as ANP staff to triage which patient we need to see first; this is especially important when there can be long distances between care homes."

A carer at a care home added: "I used to spend ages on the telephone trying to ring through for my residents, now I send it through, and get a response that they will be seen."