

PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF END OF LIFE CARE IN CARE HOMES AND AT HOME: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Macmillan End of Life Care Team

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Background

Provision of palliative and end of life care, irrespective of care setting, is a national and Lothian target (Living and Dying Well in Lothian 2010).

Living and Dying Well; Scotland's action plan for palliative care (2008) recommended that all generalist health and social care staff should have palliative care education to support their practice.

People in the last years of their life have more complex health needs; many have complex co-morbidities, which can make diagnosing the palliative, end of life and dying phase more challenging.

Aim

To improve the quality of end of life care for residents in care homes (Private/ Voluntary & Local Authority), and for people dying at home in Lothian.

Method

Contact was made with every care home manager in Lothian. Those who agreed to participate were visited by a facilitator for completion of baseline questionnaire, memorandum of understanding and pre education case note review.

Inclusion criteria for review were expected death and resident died in care home. 3 reviews were completed per care home or number of expected deaths in preceding year if <3. End of life study days were delivered locally.

The team was approached by City of Edinburgh Council, and asked to deliver study days for home care staff. Training materials were adapted and 8 days were delivered.

Resource packs containing relevant tools, references and supporting materials were supplied for each care home and per participant (for home care).

Evaluations were completed on the day and followed up by 3 monthly reflective participant questionnaires. Opportunity was also given for Managers to feedback.

These are currently being collected and analysed.

Figure 1: Number of staff trained September 2013–June 2014

	Total care homes	Care homes participating	Study days delivered to date	Staff trained to date
NHS Lothian	93	51	33	398
City of Edinburgh Council	n/a	n/a	8	117
Totals	93*	51	41	515

*excludes current work in North Edinburgh care homes n=31

Joint working and interprofessional collaboration

GPs, District Nurses, Concurrent projects, Care Home Liaison Nurses, Practice Educators, Further Education, Specialist Palliative Care, Pharmacy, Nurse Consultant, Care Inspectorate, Scottish Care, Local Authorities, National Guidelines Group, Other Health Board Areas.

Initial feedback

"I will have more confidence in dealing with end of life situations: who to contact when situations arise, sharing information and communicating effectively for the best possible outcome for service user and family".

"...spiritual care involving music and sounds of birds was played on a CD which the resident loved".

"Knowing about 'just in case' medicines is useful because it means there is no delay in treatment, or waiting for scripts".

Conclusions

This project has supported staff in delivering palliative and end of life care in adult care home and home care settings within Lothian. In line with health and social care integration, this has promoted partnership working by allowing staff opportunities to share experiences and gain understanding of each others roles and responsibilities when caring for people at end of life. Data collected will be used to inform practice development and palliative care redesign work within Lothian. Of particular interest is the fact that over 89% of residents in care homes die from a non-cancer cause.

Evaluations have demonstrated where learning has influenced practice, for example:

- minimising avoidable admissions at end of life by promotion of anticipatory care planning
- improved symptom management and recognition of dying
- use of advance care planning to inform future care decisions and facilitate choice for those at end of life
- raised confidence and ability to engage in sensitive conversations
- improved understanding of spiritual care and how it can be delivered to those at end of life.

References

1. Scottish Government (2008) Living and dying well: A national action plan for palliative and end of life care in Scotland
2. NHS Lothian (2010) Living and dying well in Lothian



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