

A Novel Collaborative Approach to Swallowing, Nutrition and Medication Management using Digital Technology

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Project Background:

Difficulties with Swallowing, is known to precipitate malnutrition and affect compliance with medication significantly affects residents in care homes. Currently, Speech and Language Therapists, Dietitians and Pharmacists provide separate home visits. Residents need to be referred to all three professionals, be on three different waitlists, and attend three separate appointments. While waiting, residents continue to deteriorate, resulting in poor outcomes and experiences. This causes more stress to care homes staff who need to make decisions about their care without support. As the residents' health further deteriorates, they need to be taken to the hospital for admission, which is costly and causes further bed blockage in an already over stretched hospital system.

Project Aims/Objectives:

To contribute to a prudent sustainable recovery, the project used the Quintuple Aims to ensure that the proposed service improvement is based on the latest internationally recognised health and care improvement framework.

Aim 1: To improve individual care experiences by reducing waiting times and receiving seamless, integrated care from multiple professionals.

Aim 2: Improve clinical outcomes using standardized therapy outcome measures for three

Aim 3: To evaluate costs reduction or cost-neutral opportunities in using the novel intervention

Aim 4: To report workforce wellbeing from interviews and workforce-reported outcome measures when using this new model

Aim 5: To assess equity of care to elderly residents in care homes with complex and chronic health issues when using digital technology

Project Approach:

A three phase approach was used in four care homes between three disciplines

1. Collaboration phase—4 months



2. Training Phase- 2 months

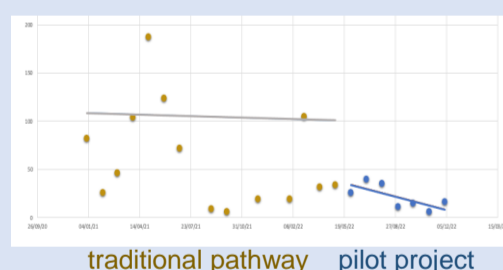


3. Pilot and Evaluation- 6 months

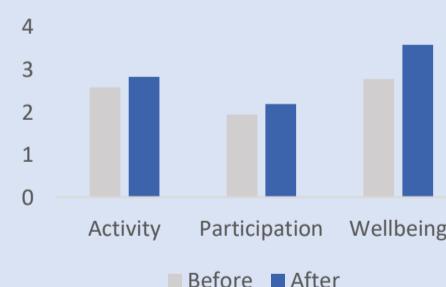


Project Outcomes:

Improved resident's experience as waiting times reduced by 75%

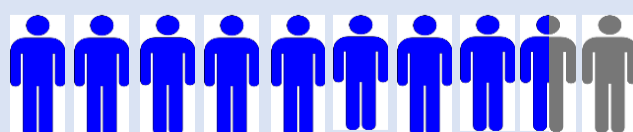


Improved Quality of Life outcomes

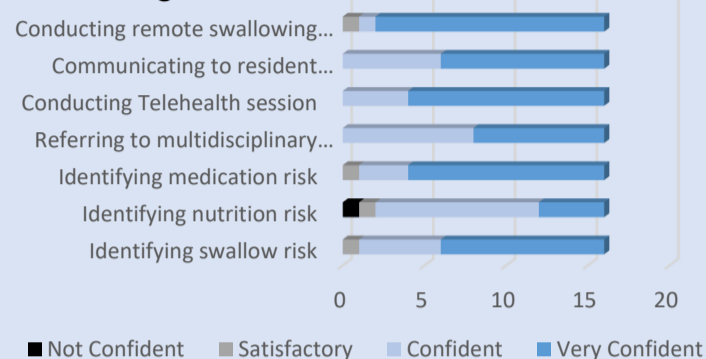


Potential savings of £48,645.37 pa

85% of referrals completed care using telehealth



Improved workforce confidence and wellbeing



Project Impact:

- Improved experience and clinical outcomes for care home residents
- Increase NHS capacity: In a year, additional 66 hospital bed days are released and community staff can see 50 more clients
- Greener planet: saved 1.12T of Co2
- Improved workforce confidence and wellbeing with potential implications for recruitment and retention
- Provided a model on how to use technology to provide equitable patient centered care

Key Conclusions:

A remote integrated model of services to care home residents has shown positive patient experience, improved clinical outcomes, potential cost reduction, increased workforce confidence, and can provide equitable care for vulnerable patients in the community.

Next Steps:

- Need further partnerships to scale and spread across Wales
- Optimize training of clinical and digital skills to care home staff
- Develop the multidisciplinary offer to care home residents to enhance preventative care & reduce hospital admission (e.g., include occupational therapists, physiotherapist, dentistry, palliative care)