Information for Care Homes

Care Home In-Reach

Service to support Care Homes caring for people with dementia

**What is the Care Home In-Reach Service?**

Three multi-professional teams from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust who work in partnership with Care and Nursing Homes to improve the quality of life of people with dementia. We work with managers and staff to develop an action plan for time-limited work of up to 16 weeks. The service goes beyond training to address factors which support changes in practice over time, after the team has withdrawn.

The staff have substantial experience of working in care homes and are aware of the realities and challenges of providing person-centred care to people with dementia and complex needs. There is significant emphasis on multi-agency liaison and joint working with primary and secondary care colleagues and other in-reach services.

**Why has this service been developed?**

To work with care homes and GPs to improve the quality of care, reduce antipsychotic prescribing and unnecessary hospital admissions, in line with national guidance. The use of antipsychotic medication has been shown to be ineffective in the majority of cases and to cause significant harm in terms of stroke and mortality.

**Questions for Care Homes**

- Would you benefit from help to put dementia care training into everyday practice?
- Are you caring for people who who sometimes show distress or behaviours which challenge?
- Would you like some help to review and reduce the use of antipsychotic medications?

**How can we help?**

- Offer a flexible range of guidance and learning opportunities which are agreed and tailored for each home.
- Support homes with meeting national standards
- Review the use of medication and offer advice on care planning including the use of alternative psychosocial interventions.
- Spend time with staff and discuss best practice in relation to the quality of life of all people in the care home.
- Join staff meetings to develop a range of ideas about how to reduce psychological and behavioural distress and different ways of communicating with people with dementia.
- Discuss with staff what they could do more of, what they could do differently and what new techniques to use to respond to people with distress and behaviours which challenge.
- Encourage staff to access learning materials about dementia care and put ideas into everyday care.

**CHiR Levels of Delivery**

The CHiR service works across four levels, ranging from working with individuals, providing staff learning and development through to promoting working across care homes:

**Level 1 Working with an individual with psychological and behavioural distress.**

For example: Mr X often shouts out and spends most of the day walking around the home calling for his wife who died 20 years ago. He is reluctant to join others in the dining room. He is being given medication which is making him unsteady on his feet. There is a danger of falling.
“I was worried that he would have to move into a new home if his behaviour worsened, the team helped me to understand how staff could manage his behaviour more psychologically and clearly explained the benefits of reducing his medication.” - Relative

Level 2 Proactive work with individuals and with the care environment using methods to minimise or prevent problems from arising

For example: A number of people are becoming restless and agitated and walking without much purpose or tending to sit with little to do. The environment is not very stimulating.

“The CHiR input for my patient seems to have benefitted him immensely. He is now not on medication and has begun to take more of an interest in his surroundings.” - GP

“Since the environmental changes, and the reduction antipsychotic medication, he is pacing less, is able to engage in conversations and activities better, and is less restless.” - OT

Level 3 Learning and development, based on a core set of learning outcomes mapped against national standards.

For example: Nursing home staff have been given some basic training in dementia care but have not fully put all the ideas into practice. However, staff are willing to try new ideas.

“Your input has been invaluable in improving quality of life for some of our more challenging residents, especially the specific tools you provide. I feel that you exceeded the action points initially identified and gave valuable support to a staff team who were going through a difficult time, leaving them more confident and aware of the skills they have.” - Care Home Manager

Level 4 Learning and development across care homes

For example: A manager of a home is struggling and they do not know where to turn or who could possibly support him. They also do not know any other managers who they could ask for advice from.

“CHiR helped us network and learn about other agencies and homes, so that we know what’s out there. Before this we had no idea.” - Care Home, Manager

If you would like more information about the Care Home In-Reach service, please contact:

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