

Care home support team

Overview

The care home support team (CHST) covering Horsham, Crawley and Mid Sussex delivered large face-to-face training sessions on a quarterly basis. When the pandemic hit, the team instigated a digital approach so that training sessions could continue. The CHST is provided by Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust.

What the organisation did

The CHST changed to predominantly virtual ways of working, supported by digital technology. The CHST provided bespoke virtual e-learning sessions via Zoom on topics that care homes requested, including catheter care, pressure areas and urinary tract infections.

The CHST has also hosted virtual forums for care home staff, acute partner geriatricians, and local authority partners. The forums are an opportunity to discuss any concerns raised by the care homes and to identify and agree solutions. For example, with personal protective equipment or training. The team also started sending its quarterly newsletter on a bi-weekly basis, to ensure staff were kept up to date of any new guidance or developments.

Focusing on proactive and reactive ways of working in partnership has ensured care is wrapped around the care home residents.

Results

This enhanced communication and collaborative working across the system using different digital channels has ultimately provided swifter and more coordinated care for care home residents, as well as more effective use of staff time.

Other benefits:

- Supporting rapid sharing of information and documents across many partners.
- Establishing robust joint working with the local authority, CCGs, pharmacists and wider system partners.
- The whole system now has a much greater awareness of issues in care home and how more tailored support can be provided.



Challenges

- A risk of losing the human factor by not being in the same room for patient interactions.
- Some care homes do not have the required technology and IT infrastructure to support virtual meetings and digital approaches.

What is needed to sustain the change

- Improved IT infrastructure across all care homes to provide equal access to the benefits of working in a virtual / digital environment.
- Maintaining the impetus to continue with this new way of working in the aftermath of COVID-19.
- Ensure funding for the Enhanced Health in Care Homes Direct Enhanced Service contract supports these digital ways of working when the emergency COVID-19 funding ends.

Contact

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