



# NEW MODELS OF CARE IN PRACTICE

## ENHANCED HEALTH IN CARE HOMES VANGUARD

### CONNECTING CARE – WAKEFIELD DISTRICT

Connecting Care – Wakefield District vanguard has been focussing on improving the health and wellbeing of local care home residents.

Connecting Care – Wakefield is bringing the right professionals from health and social care services and care homes together and establishing new ways of working to prevent ill health and deliver better care when residents do fall ill. New multidisciplinary teams, encompassing professionals from all the partner organisations including GPs, community nurses, social care workers, mental health practitioners, therapists, volunteers and pharmacists are now able to support the team working in a care home in a variety of important ways.

Most importantly, this more joined-up approach has allowed the partners to help care home staff to develop their own skills in dealing with the complex medical needs of their residents. This means issues are being identified early and resolved before they develop into an emergency which can be distressing for the resident and require an emergency call out from a medical team or admission to hospital.

The vanguard is also sharing information between the different professionals involved in a resident's care. They have developed shared personalised care plans for residents which means that a resident who has multiple needs is having these addressed in a coordinated way to ensure that their overall health is improving. These simple shared care records are also helping care home staff to understand their residents better and increasing the confidence of staff to do the things which can dramatically improve the quality of life of residents, like being more aware of their personalities and histories.

Through talking to residents and their families about what really matters to them and would make a difference to their lives, the vanguard has put in place a range of measures to promote residents interacting together and feeling connected to their local community. Social isolation and loneliness are known to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, therefore this is an important area of work.



### KEY FACTS IN NUMBERS

- In 2016/17, the vanguard care homes reduced emergency admissions by 13 per cent and reduced ambulance call outs by 5 per cent. This was compared to an increase of 18 per cent in call outs to other non-participating care homes in Wakefield District.
- In 2014/15, 38 per cent of residents in an extra care scheme terminated their tenancies to move into residential care. By 2016/17 with the vanguard in place, this has been reduced to none.
- Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health: research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad, 2015).

Care homes have developed programmes which see residents getting into their local community for activities like health walks, visiting a local church or going to a tea dance, as well as activities which see the community coming into a care home, for example bringing a choir or a dog in to visit. The programme also includes activities which encourage residents to share their memories with each other and staff to help them get to know each other better and form social relationships and networks within their care home.

The vanguard has also been working with people before they have to go into care homes. Working with extra care settings, for those who need a bit of extra support but do not require to be in residential care, has enabled the vanguard to prove that with the right interventions in place the process of moving into residential care can be slowed down and in some cases be stopped altogether. In an extra care setting, residents can retain an independent lifestyle, while still living within a larger secure scheme.

In 2014/15, at Croftlands Extra Care scheme managed by Wakefield District Housing, 38 per cent of tenancies terminated were due to residents moving into residential or nursing care. When this was reviewed in 2016/17 following the support of the vanguard, it was established that residents terminating their tenancies to move into residential or nursing care had fallen to 0 per cent.

**Further information:** To learn more about the work of the vanguards and the new care models programme visit [www.england.nhs.uk/vanguards](http://www.england.nhs.uk/vanguards) or join the conversation on Twitter using **#futureNHS**

