

ALIGN 2: managing falls and frailty

Aligning stakeholders in the management of falls and frailty across North West London

Allied Health Enterprise Development Centre (AHEDC) is a joint venture between Allied Health Solutions and Buckinghamshire New University. The focus is to bring into line stakeholders across all agencies, sectors and professional groups in the management of falls and frailty across North West London.

What we wanted to achieve

The scope of the project was to:

- spread the innovation, best practice and shared learning gathered about falls management across a wider geography in North West London (NWL)
- support and develop primary care teams in the management of falls and frailty through the primary care networks in the Clinical Commissioning Groups in NWL
- support and develop care home workers in the management of falls.

The project objectives include:

- identification of skills, knowledge and expertise of primary care teams and care home workers in this topic area across the professions from the different organisations in

- the management of falls and frailty
- identification of the link between falls and frailty
- identification of how skills and knowledge could be shared with regards to falls management and frailty through observation, shadowing and learning from others in the organisations involved
- identification of innovation in the management of falls in primary care and care homes and how this innovation can be spread to other organisations across NWL
- identification of how learning can inform and support public health
- how people who need care and support can help recognise risk factors for falls and the early signs of frailty.

What we did

We sought and secured agreement from ten organisations in North West London to develop a multi-professional network in falls and frailty.

A significant strength of ALIGN 2 is the partnership working and the diversity of partners. Representatives from 13 healthcare partner organisations have come together to share knowledge and experience about falls and frailty management.

Falls and frailty conference and multiprofessional falls and frailty workshops

The falls and frailty conference on 7 March 2016 brought together stakeholders from different professional backgrounds and from different sectors across NWL to learn and share their expertise

Multi-professional falls and frailty workshops

In collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners North and West London Faculty, the ALIGN 2 team developed a programme for a free half day multiprofessional falls and frailty workshop.

The aim of the workshops was to provide health and care professionals from across disciplines to increase their knowledge and skills in the management of falls and frailty.

Falls and frailty teaching sessions in the GP vocational trainee schemes in NWL

We delivered three hour falls and frailty sessions as part of the GP vocational training schemes. This has involved working with the programme directors for each scheme.

Each session has been advertised to other disciplines in addition to the GP trainees to enable a multiprofessional learning experience.

The content of the three hour session includes:

- what are frailty and falls?
- why are falls and frailty important?
- why does it matter to me as the doctor?
- devising a management plan for a patient
- identifying hazards
- different disciplines
- how the voluntary sector supports people.

Delivery of falls and frailty training to care home workers

In Brent and Harrow, there were already well established partnerships with care home providers. This meant that the planning and

delivery of falls and frailty training for care home workers in Brent and Harrow was easier to progress than other boroughs.

The model comprises five taught half days and one full day over six months where home care workers attended each of the sessions. £10 was paid for each care home worker to attend each of the six days. Topics covered included:

- foot health
- bone health
- vision
- nutrition
- medication checks that help prevent falls in care homes
- dementia and challenging behaviour - tips for falls prevention
- skin care after a fall
- handling patients safely and caring for the older skin
- movement and wellbeing
- making a care home falls assessment.

ALIGN online learning development

The [ALIGN website](#) hosts presentations from the falls and frailty workshops and conference for people to access and the discussion forum continues to be used.

Freda's Fall interactive e-learning

[Freda's Fall](#) was produced during the original ALIGN project. This interactive e-learning has been used in each of the GP trainee sessions to support delivery of the training.

What we achieved

Development of a multiprofessional network across NWL in falls and frailty

The project engaged a wide range of healthcare professionals including those in the NHS, local authority, voluntary sector, independent sector,

clinical commissioning and service users to network and share best practice in falls and frailty across North West London.

(We had) 13 fewer falls in the following month after the training was held.

A care home manager

Falls and frailty conference and multiprofessional falls and frailty workshops

64 people attended the conference, representing 34 different organisations including care homes and residential homes, the voluntary sector, NHS and local authority healthcare providers, GP practices, clinical commissioning groups, education commissioning, providers and private organisations.

A sample of what attendees identified they will do differently as a result of attendance at the conference included:

- ensuring home settings are assessed for hazards
- encouraging the use of aids/help
- raising patients' awareness of the services they are entitled to
- being kind and understanding the effect of kind behaviour on mood and confidence
- looking at how frailty assessment can be embedded into falls risk/care plan
- having an holistic view of the person rather than a focus on diagnosis
- trying to set up a close working relationship with the London Ambulance Service regarding appropriate use of A&E
- involving carers in the community in managing patient's frailty and falls.

Multiprofessional falls and frailty workshops

Two workshops have been held with 47 participants attending both the first one in

January 2016 and the second in March 2016.

Examples of what attendees learnt from the workshops included:

- assessments being used
- the various referral pathways available
- how to help myself to prevent falls
- holistic understanding of falls and frailty in elderly patients and what services are available
- podiatry is the main area I need more information on and the presentation will affect my future patient care
- clear substantiation of the "concept" of frailty.

Falls and frailty teaching sessions in the GP vocational trainee schemes in NWL

To date we have had a total of 150 GP trainees attend the sessions. All the sessions have been extremely well evaluated with the following being some of the areas identified as important by those attending:

- case studies
- use of the actor
- the different Allied Health Professionals and their role in falls and frailty
- Age UK
- small group sessions
- different topics covered (some practical)
- hazard perception
- following a patient pathway.

There is now interest from North Central and East London for the session to be run in the eleven GP vocational trainee schemes in this area.



Staff require this training to be able to identify the early signs, and how to prevent falls and the reporting processes.



Homecare worker

Delivery of falls and frailty training to care home workers

The Harrow and Brent care home training captured how participants practice would change as a result of the sessions. Examples included:

- using the right equipment with the right residents
- looking at environmental, external factors that could lead to a fall. Looking at quality of care plans and risk assessment
- recommended footwear, teaching the patient how to look after their feet and creaming the foot on a daily basis
- giving balanced food, encouraging drinking fluids, increasing calcium, vitamin D and other mineral intake
- what osteoporosis is, which age group it could affect more, and what treatments are good
- how people taking steroids and anti-epilepsy drugs can affect bone health, different medications for osteoporosis and Vitamin D deficiency, and side effects and symptoms to watch out for on medications.

What we learnt

A key to the success of this project as it developed was the crucial importance of engaging with stakeholders in each of the partner organisations. Project steering group membership was inclusive of all partner organisations. Project progress was discussed

and stakeholder input was requested from those unable to attend the steering groups.

It was also really important to set out the project plan of activities for the duration of the project and look to identifying ways to continue the work beyond the projects funding.

Ensuring multiprofessional learning opportunities throughout the project was also of significant importance. This included healthcare professionals other than GP trainees such as allied health professionals and nurses in both delivering and being learners in these sessions.

Challenges identified through the project risk register and how they were overcome included:

- a potential lack of collective engagement across the clusters in the project and each working at a different pace. This was mitigated by identifying the individual plans in each cluster to support the project
- lack of time for front line clinical staff to support the development and delivery of the education and training including the education packages. This was mitigated by appropriate funding being allocated to the partner organisations to undertake some of the activities
- lack of engagement and collaboration with the care home sector to be part of and benefit from this project. This risk was mitigated by learning from the established work with care homes in Brent and Harrow which has enabled a similar model to be translated to other boroughs.

This project was funded by the Workforce Development Innovation Fund. It aims to fund projects that are innovative in their approach to influencing workforce development in the longer term. Find out more on the Skills for Care [website](#).

For more information please visit

www.cepn-align.org/

Project lead: **June Davis**
Director
Allied Health Solutions

Email: junedavis@alliedhealthsolutions.co.uk

Skills for Care recommends

Whilst we have not produced any specific resources related to falls and frailty, the topics section of our website includes guidance and resources related to a number of areas of care.

Assisting and Moving

Including advice about training such as who can provide it and how frequently it should be refreshed.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Topics/Assisting-and-moving

Health and Safety

Including advice about training and the Care Certificate, as well as Lone Worker Safety Guide and other resources.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Topics/Health-and-Safety

Mental Health

Including our Common Core Principles, dealing with difficult behaviour and other resources.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Topics/Mental-Health

Skills for Care
West Gate
6 Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP
telephone 0113 245 1716
email info@skillsforcare.org.uk
web www.skillsforcare.org.uk

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