

# Sutton Homes of Care vanguard programme

**Sutton Homes of Care vanguard programme has designed and developed a wide range of resources to enhance the training and skills of our care staff to deliver better and safer care in Sutton.**

Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was awarded Vanguard status in March 2015 – one of only **six enhanced health in care home vanguards in England**.

Our aim is to improve the health and quality of life for all care home residents in Sutton by delivering a new care model that offers older people living in care homes improved and integrated health care and rehabilitation services.

The vanguard programme builds on work that has been undertaken with our care homes over the past two years.

We work in partnership with local health and social care providers including The London Borough of Sutton, Age UK Sutton and The Alzheimer's Society across a registered GP population of 191,000 and 27 GP Practices.

Without our care home providers, none of this would be possible- our partners are critical to the delivery of The Sutton Homes of Care vanguard programme.

Over the coming years, the number of older people with complex healthcare needs is predicted to increase significantly. In turn, this will lead to an increase in demand for care.



It's crucial that care home residents are treated with compassion, empathy, respect and carers have a thorough understanding of residents' physical, mental, and emotional needs to ensure they continue to have the best quality of life possible.

## What we wanted to achieve

Ambulance data showed high volumes of calls were from care homes and an audit showed that many calls could have been dealt with by other services.

To enable a reduction of inappropriate calls to the ambulance service, a series of resources have been produced in collaboration with our care homes and partners across the health and social care system to provide care home staff with up-to-date and immediate information about appropriate referrals to services and guidance on best practice in providing care.

All resources are available [on our website](#).



Through the vanguard programme the staff and myself have been given the skills and confidence to care for our residents in a much more proactive way. We now feel that we have more resources and support to provide the best possible care for our residents. Throughout the whole process we have been actively involved and feel that we have had a voice instead of just being 'told' what to do.



**Sarah Stacey, Care Home Manager,  
Crossway's Nursing Home**

## What we did

The content was developed together with a range of local partners including community nursing services, hospital staff, care home staff and the London Ambulance Service.

Both posters and reference cards along with training films were developed as resources to address key issues, such as which service is the appropriate service to contact when a resident becomes unwell, how to identify when a resident is dehydrated, preventing and managing urinary tract infections, falls, identifying sepsis, pain, mental capacity, and safeguarding. The resources have been distributed across the care home network in Sutton, standardising the information available to improve the confidence and competence of care home staff and improve the health of our care residents.

The resources have led to better decision making by care home staff, which has resulted in better health outcomes for the residents as well as significant benefits for the wider health economy. The resources available are posters which are fixed in visible locations in the care homes along with credit-card-sized reference cards which are attached to staff key rings or lanyards dependant on the choice of the care home. Training films are emailed to the care home manager for the care home staff to watch as part of a training session within the care home as well as at their convenience.

One of the most useful tools is the signposting poster for referring to the appropriate service as an alternative to ringing the ambulance. The signposting poster is called Are You Concerned About A Resident?, and locally is known as the CAAR poster. This poster outlines all of the referral options for residents when they are unwell in an urgent situation. This ensures staff can make the appropriate decision to refer to the appropriate service enabling care home residents to receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

More defined resources such as the sepsis reference card were created to help identify the signs of sepsis and standardise the referral process. The sepsis reference card enables staff to identify if the resident has sepsis and ensure they receive the most appropriate care, in the most appropriate place. This has proven to improve patient outcomes by identifying early that the resident is unwell and avoiding an acute episode by earlier treatment by the most appropriate service.

All resources are launched at our care home managers forums and communicated through our newsletters.

## What we achieved

The low cost for production of these resources has led to significant benefits for the NHS. As a part of a wider programme, these resources have contributed to reductions in ambulance callouts, A&E attendances and emergency hospital admissions, freeing up much hospital beds and other resources across the health system.

The poster, films and reference cards have delivered a number of key successes to date for staff, residents and the health system as a whole:

**Better access to services:** by standardising the information available on referral options, signs of illness and necessary steps in key situations, staff are able to help the residents receive the most appropriate care. This has led to better outcomes for care home residents as well greater speed and efficiency around healthcare matters.

**The overall programme has seen a reduction in ambulance call-outs, A&E attendances and hospital admissions:** getting residents the right care at the right time does not always mean an ambulance call-out or hospital attendance. We've been able to sustain the initial reduction in ambulance activity against an increase in the local population ambulance activity.

Overall attendances at A&E from Sutton care homes has reduced as more treatment is being provided outside of hospital, which is better for residents, care staff and the system as a whole.

**More confident care home staff:** historically, care home staff have lacked confidence and worry about making mistakes when it comes to health matters. This resulted in unnecessary referrals to ambulance services and acute services.

However, by providing the staff with the information they really need, they have been empowered to make better decisions, identify when a care resident is becoming unwell and ensure the appropriate care is delivered by either early intervention or appropriate referrals. This has led to greater confidence amongst care homes staff, residents and their families, who are often reassured by the greater confidence, knowledge and competence the care home staff now have and the support services that refer to.

**Changing culture in care homes:** change in culture in an established organisation takes time but there has been significant change in the behaviours of staff since the introduction of the resources, and training. Staff can now take greater responsibility for the healthcare of the residents, rather than relying on ambulance, community teams and hospital staff.

## What we learnt

The most significant lesson learnt is that more reference materials would be welcomed, covering other key issues. Staff appreciate the simplicity and accessibility of the information and there are other areas in which they could provide support. As a result, there is a desire to produce more reference cards and posters in the future to continue to support care home staff. However, care will be taken to ensure staff are not inundated with a high volume of information.

In addition, staff have suggested that other media and formats could be introduced such as the additional use of digital technology and different sized printed materials. As a result, different sized posters will be used where appropriate have been produced to supplement the printed materials.



**By developing education and training resources for care home staff that is transferable to care staff across the social care sector, we are empowering care staff with the information they need to provide the best care possible to residents.**



**Christine Harger, Quality Assurance Manager, Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group**

**For more information please visit:**  
[www.suttonccg.nhs.uk/vanguard](http://www.suttonccg.nhs.uk/vanguard)

**Project lead:**  
**Christine Harger, Quality Assurance Manager**

**Email:**  
[christine.harger@nhs.net](mailto:christine.harger@nhs.net)

## Skills for Care recommends

### [Health and social care integration](#)

Skills for Care's Learn from Others resource includes a range of case studies from services delivering integration innovations.

[www.learnfromothers.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.learnfromothers.skillsforcare.org.uk)

### [Find an endorsed provider](#)

Our list of endorsed providers offer a wide range of quality courses and qualifications across England.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/Endorsement-framework/Search.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/Endorsement-framework/Search.aspx)

### [Culture for Care](#)

Our toolkit can be used by employers to develop and embed a positive workplace culture.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Leadership-management/Positive-workplace-culture/Culture-toolkit/Culture-toolkit.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Leadership-management/Positive-workplace-culture/Culture-toolkit/Culture-toolkit.aspx)



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Skills for Care  
West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP

**T: 0113 245 1716**  
**E: [info@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforcare.org.uk)**

**[skillsforcare.org.uk](http://skillsforcare.org.uk)**