

Embedding the Five Good Communication Standards in 3 Lothian care homes

NHS Lothian, Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

SLT secured project funding for a full time therapist for a year. Daisy Blair took on the role.

Background Only 6% of Care Home referrals to SLT request support with communication, yet we know people living in care homes have communication needs.

Aims:

Using the [Five good communication standards](#)

Understand the communication needs of care home residents



Audit how well needs are met in the 3 homes

Support staff to implement the standards

Analysis of care plans showed

- 100% of residents ($n=120$) had communication needs
- 85% had difficulty with understanding **and** speaking
- Over half had moderate-severe needs.

so
Daisy

Daisy found

- Very limited knowledge or information in care plans about supporting the person's communication
- Staff didn't realise things could be better, so in 2 out of 3 care homes they weren't ready to engage with training and morale was low

Demonstrated the potential to improve residents' participation and wellbeing by **adapting communication**.

Provided specialist SLT input with **multi-disciplinary teams**: OT, music therapy, activities co-ordinators, including setting up **reminiscence groups**

Instigated creation of **life stories** in partnership with students from Queen Margaret University

Used **doll therapy** to reduce distress

Designed a new **Communication Template** for care plans

Established "**What matters to me**" posters

Delivered training if/when staff were "ready"

Modelled **intensive interaction**

Organised support from the **learning disability** team

Key points

- Staff were not ready for a training package. A **flexible, hands on proactive approach** worked well, taking advantage of opportunities as they arose in a changeable environment.
- **One size does not fit all**. Interventions had to be tailored to each setting.
- **Relationship building and co-production** with staff and other professionals was essential.

Recommendations

- The current referral based, reactive SLT service does not meet the communication needs of care home residents. This affects the wellbeing of both residents and staff.
- Achieving good communication standards in Lothian care homes requires provision of a dedicated, specialist SLT team, offering proactive communication support, working in collaboration with existing teams and networks. This is in addition to current community SLT provision.

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