NHS
Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Better Nutrition in Care Homes: BeNCH

BACKGROUND

Malnutrition is a common concern within Care Homes with up to 42% of Care Home residents at risk (1). In NW Surrey there are over 2500 Care Home beds for older people across 48 Residential or Nursing Homes. Disease related malnutrition can lead to complications e.g. chest infections or pressure sores which can increase demand on GP and hospital services. Optimising nutritional care within Care Homes is therefore essential, particularly given the additional challenges of COVID-19.

AIM

To develop a training program for Care Home staff to improve knowledge and understanding of nutrition and hydration.

THE PROCESS

Questionnaires were sent to all 48 Care Homes to gather information on their current nutritional practice and to identify training needs. 38/48 Care Homes responded and this identified the common themes for training needs and established the priorities for the BeNCH Project:

- To improve knowledge of nutrition for all Care Home staff (from carers to kitchen staff to management)
- To have a consistent approach to nutrition across NW Surrey
- To promote Food First interventions (before prescribed supplements) and to improve the quality of food service received by residents
- To empower care homes to make necessary changes.

The first training session on Malnutrition and Food First was written in line with the resources used locally by the Surrey Heartlands Dietitians. The presentation was then approved by colleagues in North West Surrey. The session was piloted, before being launched to all 48 care homes. The training is run virtually using Microsoft Teams allowing a wider reach and increased discussion between the different Care Homes attending.

MEASURES

- A questionnaire was completed by attendees before the training to establish baseline knowledge .
- Another questionnaire was completed after the training session to assess changes in knowledge and to identify further training needs.
- Feedback was given on what was found most useful during the training:

OUTCOMES

- In the first 3 months, 158 staff from 23 Care Homes completed the Malnutrition and Food First training.
- 114 completed the pre-training questionnaire and 50 completed the post-training questionnaire.
- Confidence in completing MUST(Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool) accurately increased from 5.6/10 to 8.3/10. Over 50% reported confidence of 10/10 after attending the training.
- Across all professions, knowledge of MUST improved, specifically what MUST is, how often it should be completed and what the MUST score indicates.
- The poorest response was identifying how to manage a resident who cannot be weighed. This shows there is additional training needed for the more complex residents within the Care Home setting.
- 96% reported they found the whole session useful with only 2 respondents reporting part of the session as "least useful".
- CQC are supportive of the training and will help promote the program with care homes.

Word Cloud of Feedback Post Training

NEXT STEPS

- Extend the teaching to Learning Disability homes
- Work directly with individual Care Homes on how they can adopt the training within their home and monitor for improvements
- Identify the next topic of training that would be beneficial
- Work with MDT colleagues to develop future training
- Liaise with CQC on how to take the project further.
- Have been approached by a Nutrition publication to share the project l

THE TEAM: Janet Brewer, Care Home Support Team Dietitian and Project Lead; Ciara Tilley, Therapy Manager for Dietetics and SLT; Lou Davies; Gareth Jones and Gill Nelson, QI Team; and Cheryl Ferguson, Comms.

References:
(1) https://www.bapen.org.uk/malnutrition-undernutrition/introduction-to-malnutrition?start=4 (accessed 11/01/2021)