

TSA Member case study

Tunstall and Coast & Country

Avoiding falls, ambulance call outs and A&E attendance using technology in care homes

Background

Falls-related injuries particularly affect the frail elderly, with 30% of people aged 65 and older, and 50% of people aged 80 and older falling at least once a year. The human cost of falling is an impact on the quality of life including; distress, pain, injury, loss of confidence and loss of independence. Falls are estimated to cost the NHS nationally more than £2.3 billion per year.

Teesside based housing provider Coast & Country has built relationships spanning a wide range of health and wellbeing stakeholders in an attempt to mitigate the impact falls are having on both the NHS and residential care homes, using the HomeCall Independent Living Service to align the use of technology to the commissioning intentions of the regional CCG.

Aims

With the support of Local Authority contract management within care homes, especially around post fall management, this six month pilot aimed to:

- Aid towards the prevention of falls within residential care homes across South Tees
- Educate care home staff to manage falls more appropriately within residential care homes across South Tees
- Reduce North East Ambulance Service call outs to respond to falls within residential care homes across South Tees and conversion of calls to hospital admissions
- Evidence a reduction in the number of hospital admissions as a result of improved education around falls and management of falls within residential care homes across South Tees
- Utilise telecare equipment in the prevention of, and reaction to, falls in a residential care home
- Improve the patient experience

Using performance information of residential care homes within Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland, the project team identified the top eight priority residential care homes (four per borough) based on hospital admissions and cost of hospital admissions, and the number of call requests to North East Ambulance Service from the care home.

Solution

Coast & Country Housing's HomeCall Independent Living Service supports over 5,000 people. Many of the calls received at its monitoring centre are related to service users falling, and its response team have specialist training and equipment to enable them to help people who have fallen, avoiding unnecessary ambulance call outs. In 2014/15, HomeCall responded to more than 1,500 calls as a result of falls in the Teesside area; in 84% of cases the responders could treat the service user without the need for an ambulance.

The success of the service led the HomeCall team to discuss with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) ways they could develop a more appropriate response to non-urgent falls in. It was identified that care homes in the region were a significant user of the ambulance service, and many of these calls were unnecessary and may have been made to mitigate risk. HomeCall and the South Tees NHS Falls Team approached the South Tees Better Care Fund representative to discuss funding for a project aimed at introducing telecare and revised protocols into care homes to reduce ambulance call outs and hospital admissions.

Outcome

- During the six month scheme there were 154 hospital admissions from the pilot care homes in Q3 and Q4 2017, down from 167 in the same period the previous year, translating to a cost saving of £37,251.
- A&E attendances fell from 255 to 230, saving £3,500
- Combined reductions in callouts and response requirements from NEAS were estimated to have saved £5,543.
- Overall, the pilot was estimated to have saved the health service £20,107.

Paula Briggs, Project Manager, South Tees Better Care Fund said: *"The pilot created positive improvements and outcomes for a range of South Tees NHS services and most importantly care home residents. Their daily experience was enhanced through the reassurance and attentiveness telecare has provided. In addition to resident experience, the savings to the public purse have been incredible."*

Lawrence Christensen, Marketing Director at Tunstall said: *"Falls can have a devastating effect, both physically and in terms of loss of confidence and independence. They also cost the NHS £2.3 billion each year. This project has demonstrated how technology can not only improve people's lives by preventing falls, or mitigating their effects when they do happen, but can also deliver valuable savings to the health service in a short period of time."*

About TSA

TSA is the industry body for technology enabled care (TEC) services, representing organisations including telecare and telehealth service providers and suppliers, commissioners, digital health businesses, housing associations, emergency services, academics, charities and government bodies.

For further information about TSA services, our membership, quality standards, training and consultancy please contact us:

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