

## Notes from care home online forum – 8 November 2021

**Participants:** 5 attendees and 4 HWN staff members

### Current experiences of care homes

- Standard of care good but communication was very poor. This has improved in terms of social media and use of tablets. Mum's care home has been in repeat Covid lockdowns. Asked care home about being an Essential Care Giver and was told this was not possible during a lockdown and that she must have read that information wrong.
- One attendee's Mum has passed since the last forum but she is still keen to be involved in the forums and help others. Before her Mum died the testing system was going well but she would've liked to be able to visit more. She thinks sharing some information about what happens when a loved one dies could be useful for others. She has also offered to help with transport for relatives unable to visit their loved ones. She says it is important to be strong and firm with the care home.
- Communication was very poor at previous care home. Husband is going through a tough time with behaviour and not taking medication but staff at new care home are doing a great job. Social worker has tried to get a one-to-one carer to help with eating etc. but this is proving difficult. Feels helpless.
- Hearing that communication is very varied across care homes. Some are great, others poor and don't respond even to professionals.
- One professional attendee supporting relatives who have to travel 50-60 miles to visit their loved one and don't drive. Distance is an issue in addition to the restrictions of not being able to visit during Covid or flu outbreaks.

### Is Essential Care Giver role being honoured?

- One participant was not aware of this – info will be sent after forum.
- Another had heard of it but only through an ex-colleague and was told it wasn't appropriate at her Mum's care home. Mum got better so didn't pursue this.
- The two professionals on the call were not aware of this either but said they would make colleagues aware.

### Covid boosters and flu jabs

- All relatives of those at today's forum have had Covid boosters and flu jabs.

### Things you wish you'd known

- No understanding of how meals worked, getting washed, whether relative could have a cup of tea anytime they wished to.
- A booklet would be helpful with what happens, how things work and what questions to ask.

- One attendee said when their relative moved care homes they asked the Clinical Lead lots of questions but didn't know to do this the first time.
- Regarding the wellbeing side of things, some attendees had been told nothing and one had to buy own duvets while on the other end of the scale we heard a care home had a big folder in the coffee lounge full of information and family was able to meet with Duty Manager to ask any questions. There was a clear difference between a planned move into a care home compared to a quick move due to hospital discharge for example.
- It was agreed there should at least be a simple leaflet for relatives to explain the basics.
- Attendees will send in their thoughts of things they wish they'd known.
- Examples mentioned included bedding, laundry and labelling.

### **Terms of Reference**

- The group agreed the Terms of Reference and agreed that meetings should take place every three months.

### **Any other thoughts?**

- The Well Up North PCN is working with care homes to collect care plans and share with GPs. This will help to ensure that residents are receiving the same level care from their GP in the care home as they were when living at home. DN will look into whether other PCNs are doing something similar.
- One attendee said that their relative had to change GPs when they moved care homes and this was troublesome as they didn't have his records to begin with and the new mental health team responsible for his care did not know him like the previous team did.
- Another attendee said Mum's care home had a good Nurse Practitioner who came in every Tuesday so residents were assessed regularly if required, but realises this doesn't happen in all care homes.
- One attendee said they didn't know about NHS Continuing Healthcare and the eligibility assessment process is very complex. This could be a topic for future forums.
- The caring role very much continues even once the relative has moved into a care home.