

HEALTH AND CARE INSIGHTS

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Celebrating two years of transformation



This month, as we prepare to celebrate the second anniversary of our creation as an integrated care organisation, we are meeting a delegation from South Korea to share how we are integrating health and social care. We will be able to show them tremendous progress against our goal of improving people's health and wellbeing through delivering more services at home and in local communities. We are now working much more closely with our voluntary sector partners to improve wellbeing and reduce isolation.

We have recruited GPs and pharmacists to our community teams who support people at home, and extended their services to run seven days a week. These teams are proving so successful at helping recovery after a hospital stay, and preventing hospital admissions, that we have been able to reduce our hospital beds by nearly 100. A good measure that tells us if our services are working well together to care for people in the right place when they are unwell is the government's 'A&E four-hour wait' target: it reflects pressure on our 'front door' and capacity of our services to take patients through from assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery. Over the last six weeks, our rolling performance against this national target has been second best in the country. This is a strong indicator of the progress we are making. We know we have more to do, and we will share our plans for further transformation as they develop, but in this issue, we share some of the stories that illustrate the difference we are making to people's lives.

Home from Hospital

The voluntary sector, co-ordinated by CVS in South Devon, is working with our community teams to support early discharge from community hospitals and reduce re-admissions, through a range of one-off or short term interventions. The five voluntary organisations, which make up the Wellbeing Partnership in South Devon, each employ staff who work with the Trust's community and hospital teams and over 600 local voluntary and community groups which support people in their communities. In a ten month period, the staff providing this service supported more than 1,000 people and attended an average of 41 MDT meetings each month. Here are just two examples of how they have helped improve people's lives:

“John has dementia and was struggling to cope after his wife suffered a fall and was in hospital. The Rapid Response team had been supporting him, but he needed additional support until his wife was due to come home in a couple of days. We were able to visit him every day until his wife returned, and now to continue to support them both through Carer Support and Memory Loss Support.”

“We were asked to support Mary, after a hospital stay for pneumonia. She had been living on her own, in a rural location, since her husband died. When I visited her, she was still under the care of district nurses, and was in her dressing gown at lunchtime. Her grown up children live away and had organised a short-term live-in carer to support her. However, Mary was concerned about the cost of this and keen to regain her independence. We are now providing support like helping with shopping and collecting prescriptions, and social visits to support her mental health and wellbeing. As she gets stronger, we'll help her get out and about.”

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Helping people manage their medicines

We know that sometimes people with a number of long-term conditions can struggle with their medication. If they don't manage their medication properly, they can find themselves becoming unwell or even being admitted to hospital because their condition has deteriorated. We now have trained pharmacists working in our community teams to help patients get the most out of their medications. They visit patients at home, to help those people who need extra support.



Oswaldo, who works in our Moor to Sea locality, explains how he can help: “When people have to take lots of different medicines, they can become quite confused about what they have to take and when. This can be made worse when medicines are stopped or changed in hospital or by the GP. Sometimes they rely on carers or family members for support, but they don't necessarily know what the medications are for or understand how different medications need to be given. Blister packs can help to encourage people to take the right dose of the right medicine at the right time, but not all drugs are suitable for these packs – for example liquids, inhalers, eye drops and medicines that are only taken as needed. I go in to the individual's home and carry out a detailed drug review with them and their carer or family. I check that their medication regime matches their current health needs, and discuss any changes needed with their GP.

“On home visits like this, I have found people skipping doses or forgetting other important medications. It can be that patients are experiencing side effects or that it does not fit in with their routine. Through talking to the patient and understanding why they do this, I can put an individualised plan in place. Sometimes I liaise with the community pharmacist to reorganise blister packs and coach both the patient and carers in how to take the medicines correctly. Suggesting practical solutions such as asking them to set an alarm or leaving night time medications close to the bedside can also help to avoid forgetting to take their tablets. I inform their GP and community pharmacist about any problems and work with them to better organise future medicines requests. If needed, I plan a follow-up visit to ensure that the agreed plan is working for them. Interventions like this have avoided a potential hospital admission, helped people to feel better and avoided medicines wastage.”

Dartmouth Health and Wellbeing team now on Facebook

Health and wellbeing teams are working with local people in our communities to develop services that help people to be cared for at home and in the community. We are now trying a new way to keep people up to date with local services, using social media. The Dartmouth health and wellbeing team are piloting Facebook as a way to keep in touch. If this goes well, we plan to use it across the whole of Torbay and South Devon. You can see what they're up to here: <https://www.facebook.com/DartmouthHealthandWellbeing/>

Junior doctors give thumbs up for training

We have some of the best results in the region and the country, for the education and training of doctors, in the latest General Medical Council (GMC) Trainee Survey. We achieved the highest score in our region (which was second in the country!) for the sixth year running, coming top in 15 out of 17 categories, including 'overall satisfaction'.

We hope you find this update useful and that you can see we are making real progress towards our aim of supporting more people to be well and independent. If you would like to be receive future issues by email contact tsdft.communications@nhs.net