



Case study – Community support beds

Place – Bolsover and North East Derbyshire

Place

The implementation of the community support beds following an earlier pilot is taking place in two care homes in Bolsover and Tibshelf – an area covered by the Bolsover and North East Derbyshire Place Alliance of Joined Up Care Derbyshire.

The challenge

- Patients have told us they prefer to be cared for at home or as close to home as possible
- Many people are known to stay in beds in hospital sometimes long past the date when they are medically able to leave (with appropriate support)
- Evidence shows extended stays in hospital are not always best for patients – either for their physical health or their self-confidence in being able to look after themselves
- We need to provide optimum care while making best use of our limited resources – hospital care is relatively expensive compared to care in support of people at home or in the community

What's been done to date?

A number of community support beds have been established in two care homes in north east Derbyshire. These beds are for patients who are medically well enough to leave hospital but are not quite ready to return home or to the place they will call home. Support services wrapped around the patient provide rehabilitation and reablement enabling the individuals to return home, generally after a period of around two to three weeks.

The pilot was launched in summer 2017 with Thomas Colledge House Care Home in Bolsover and Holmlea Care Home in Tibshelf receiving five and four community support beds respectively. Both homes are run by Derbyshire County Council. Plans are in place to steadily increase the number of community support beds in each home throughout 2018.

The service is commissioned by the clinical commissioning groups and Derbyshire County Council and run by care home staff who provide reablement care. They are supported by integrated community teams from Derbyshire Community Health

Services and Derbyshire County Council including advanced nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, district nurses and social workers. Each care home has a dedicated GP practice (Castle Street Medical Centre in Bolsover and Staffa Health in Tibshelf) signed up to provide clinical oversight of the community support beds.

The various team members work together to improve the patient's mobility and self-confidence, enabling the individual to return home at the earliest opportunity, sometimes with a home care package put in place if needed.

Impact

Since October 2017, 106 people have accessed the community support beds - 28 of these have been stepped up from the community as an admission avoidance instead of needing to spend unnecessary time in an acute hospital bed. In monetary terms these admission avoidances have saved approximately £66,000.

Of the 106, 98 people have been able to return back to their own homes or a place they will call their home.

Feedback from patients received so far has been very positive with people reporting that they feel involved in the decisions about their care and setting their own goals. They also report that they have felt happy with the way their family members were involved. Overall, they rate the service very highly. We are continuing to collate feedback so that a more robust evaluation can be undertaken.

A monthly meeting with all stakeholders is used to share learning from ongoing implementation and has shown improvements particularly in cross-organisational communication with improved step-down of patients from acute to community

Viewpoint

Clare Walker, Transformation Project Manager for Hardwick Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "When people are in hospital, particularly those who are more frail, they can lose the everyday skills such as being able to make drinks and meals for themselves. Their mobility is often reduced so these functioning skills need to be addressed to make sure that someone is able to cope when they return home. The community support beds are helping people to be discharged promptly from hospital with the right support in place in the community when they no longer need 24-hour hospital nursing care but would still benefit from reablement support to get them back to their home environment.

"In addition, we want to try to prevent people from going into hospital unnecessarily and, where possible, use the community support beds to provide reablement for people who would have otherwise been admitted. People accessing the community support beds will be supported by an integrated team including advanced nurse practitioners and overseen by the local GP practice. Early evaluation has shown the beds to be very effective, providing improved patient care and making best use of our available resources.

“The pilot was set up using an ‘agile’ approach over three months. Teams from community and acute services, care homes, primary care and social care were involved in developing the pathways and resources needed to kick-start the new provision. We used a ‘plan, do, study, act’ framework to get the scheme quickly in place. Within the three-month pilot we saw improvement in bed occupancy rates and this has continued throughout the implementation.

“The medical model used to support the beds has been seen as a good example of multi-disciplinary team working and has been used to develop the ‘future medical model’ for other community support beds across the county. The community support beds in Bolsover and Tibshelf are seen as the blueprint for a model which we would hope to roll out further across Derbyshire.”

Yolande Dixon, manager of Derbyshire County Council’s Thomas Colledge Care Home in Bolsover, said: “It’s been a great success – we’ve never been below 90% bed occupancy. The project has seen really good partnership working. I’ve worked for the council for 21 years and the way health and social care are working together on this has been better than ever before. Teams have sat down and worked through all aspects, from the admission process to policies and procedures, and we have harmonised all the paperwork and processes. I think before this staff saw themselves as working for ‘health’ or working for ‘social care’, this has brought people together to work as one team.”

Lisa Turner, an occupational therapist working in Derbyshire County Council’s Holmlea Care Home in Tibshelf, said: “This is a new way of helping keep people out of hospital and helping them on their return home if they have needed to go into hospital. It has required a different way of working for many people and there have been some challenges – but the challenges have been overcome and it has been shown to be successful. Among the challenges, the care home has needed to recruit additional staff and we have had to support staff in taking a rehabilitation and re-enablement approach rather than the traditional care approach. We have needed to ensure everyone understands the purpose of these community support beds. It is about helping people to become more independent and to be able to take care for themselves. We are able to work with patients in the community support beds to get them to a level where they can return home with a less costly care package than they otherwise would have had.”

Contact

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