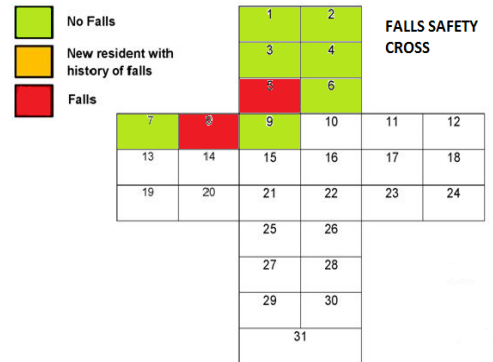


The SPACE (Safer Provision and Caring Excellence) programme: evaluation

Summary for care home managers and staff

THE SPACE PROGRAMME



Read the evaluation report here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/about/centres/clahrc/research/theme4-integrated-holistic-care-chronic-disease/publications>

The Safer Provision and Caring Excellence (SPACE) programme ran in 29 care homes in Walsall and Wolverhampton from October 2016 to December 2018. SPACE aimed to give care home managers and staff quality improvement (QI) skills training and support. The support helped staff to use QI methods and tools to make changes in their care homes to try and reduce rates of avoidable harms (e.g. falls). The West Midlands Patient Safety Collaborative funded CLAHRC West Midlands to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, and this leaflet summarises what we found.

EVALUATION METHODS AND FINDINGS

WHAT DID WE DO?

The evaluation compared data from before SPACE with data after SPACE to understand the changes made as a result of the programme.

We sent surveys to care home managers and staff before SPACE, after 1 year and after 2 years, which measured care home safety climate using the Safety Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ). We also analysed changes in rates of avoidable harms like falls and pressure ulcers, and changes to rates of hospital admissions for care home residents before and after SPACE, using data that the care homes regularly provided to Walsall and Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

We interviewed CCG managers and SPACE facilitators, and did 49 interviews with managers and staff at four 'case study' care homes to understand people's experience of SPACE. We also observed 184 hours of SPACE training, SPACE meetings, manager forums and other events.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Positive changes to safety in care homes: Most care homes used tools like safety crosses to monitor falls, and many care homes adapted the tools to monitor risks in other areas like nutrition and hydration. Care homes reported more confidence in communicating with other providers like the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS).

There was very good uptake of methods like Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles, Learning from Excellence and Appreciative Inquiry, and staff in all job roles and all levels of seniority were able to get involved and to take ownership of positive change within their care homes.

Over 1000 staff received skills and QI training, and there was widespread evidence that the learning from training was used directly to make improvements to multiple areas of safety. Staff also reported improved teamwork, communication and sharing of good practice.

Care home manager and staff experiences: Attitudes towards SPACE were very positive, with managers and staff reporting many improvements to their working practices and to quality and safety in their care homes. People were enthusiastic about SPACE and their experience of the training, and there were positive views about staff confidence and empowerment to make changes. The support from the facilitators was highly praised. Sharing of learning and best practice was widespread, and there were many reports of improvements to teamwork and collaboration both within individual care homes and across the whole group participating.

Safety Attitudes Questionnaire: Scores on the SAQ increased in all areas during SPACE despite high baseline values: safety climate improved by 1.4 points. Positive safety climate scores were linked to being a full time member of staff, being more qualified, and attending SPACE training. Scores were also more positive in larger homes, those with lower rates of staff turnover, and in care homes with higher quality ratings.

Avoidable harms: There were positive trends towards reductions in several avoidable harms. Falls rates reduced significantly in both Walsall and Wolverhampton, and urinary tract infection (UTI) rates also reduced, significantly in Walsall. Although there was a small increase in grade 2 pressure ulcers, there were reductions in grade 3 and 4 pressure ulcers, suggesting that staff were able to spot pressure ulcers early and stop them from getting worse. Combining data across both CCGs showed a significant reduction in falls, UTIs, grade 4 pressure ulcers, and in rates of 'any events'.

A&E attendance and hospital admissions: There was a slight increase in A&E attendances for care home residents in Walsall, and a significant reduction in Wolverhampton. For both CCGs, rates of hospital admissions increased when data from before and after SPACE were compared, although it is likely that the improvements made during SPACE have not been in place for long enough to show an effect on admissions.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

At the start of SPACE, there was some **suspicion** from managers and staff that SPACE would mean higher workloads and more regulations. However, the facilitators spent time building relationships with the care homes to reduce these fears and to show that SPACE was positive.

Whether or not SPACE support was effective often depended on care home **leadership**. There was a high **turnover** of managers and staff during SPACE which meant that it was sometimes difficult for positive changes and the learning from training to become embedded.

Not all care homes were equally **involved** with SPACE. Some were involved in all aspects of the programme, but others participated a lot less. Some care homes needed a lot of support to be involved, but the facilitators worked hard throughout SPACE to maximise participation.

WHAT WERE THE INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS?

1. Passionate facilitators giving flexible, intensive, hands-on support
2. Engaging and empowering staff at all levels and in all job roles
3. Quality improvements designed with the care homes
4. Delivering relevant, interesting and engaging training
5. Using simple QI tools that care homes could adapt for themselves
6. Building strong relationships with managers and supporting staff to see SPACE and QI as worthwhile
7. Care homes supported to collect and analyse their own QI data
8. Giving ideas, encouragement, resources and celebrating success
9. Managers and staff able to feel ownership of the changes they were making and see some positive results
10. SPACE care homes could share ideas and learn from each other
11. Support to work with other organisations and service providers