
Dr Mary O’Brien¹, Jennifer Kirton¹, Dr Katherine Knighting¹, Dr Rob Gandy¹, Professor Brenda Roe¹, Professor Barbara Jack¹, Caroline Flynn², Elaine Horgan³.

Background: The End of Life Care Strategy by the Department of Health identified high incidences of unnecessary admissions to hospital from care homes at the end of life and a need for training for care home staff. The Six Steps to Success programme was developed to underpin the organisational change required and support staff development to enhance end of life care within care homes. The aim of the programme is to ensure all residents receive high quality end of life care provided by a care home that encompasses the philosophy of palliative care and enables people to die where they choose.

Aim: To explore the impact of the Six Steps to Success programme on end of life care (EoLC) in care homes in north west England.

Methodology: Mixed-method evaluation in three phases; 1) Examination of audit data (quality markers and measures; post death information; Knowledge Skills and Confidence (KSC) audit) 2) Questionnaires and interviews with Six Steps Facilitators 3) Case studies of 6 care homes Analysis: descriptive statistical comparisons and frequencies & content analysis to identify themes.

Results (selection): 1. 100% improvement for ‘Advance Care Planning’ and ‘Communication’ 2. Improvements in staff KSC e.g. 92% improvement for Spirituality skills; 79% improvement for Advance Care Planning (ACP) knowledge. 3. Increase in residents dying in their preferred place of death from 81.5% to 83.1% 4. Increase in residents dying with an ACP in place from 45% to 56%. 5. EoLC documentation in care homes improved

Conclusion: Clear improvement in EoLC in care homes. Greater use of EoLC tools, eg ACP. KSC in EoLC improved markedly in care home staff ensuring residents’ wishes and preferences at end of life were met. More confident and better trained care home staff are now empowered to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and ensure more residents are able to die in their preferred place.

Undoubtedly the Six Steps to Success programme has helped care home staff to deliver better end of life care for their residents.

Contact details: Dr Mary O’Brien, EPRC, Faculty of Health and Social Care, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, L39 4QP, Tel +44 (0)1695 650918, Email: obrienm@edgehill.ac.uk

¹ Evidence-based Practice Research Centre, Edge Hill University, UK; ²Cheshire & Merseyside Strategic Clinical Network, UK; ³NHS England