

2013 Knowledge Transfer Scheme

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Title of research project: Improving quality of life in nursing and residential homes by implementing an evidence-based programme of best practice and person-centred care

Abstract: There are approximately 12,000 people living in nursing and residential home in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, 2012a). Current policy documents such as ‘Transforming Your Care’ (Health and Social Care Board, 2011) and Who Cares? (DHSSPS, 2012b), focus on supporting people at home. While this will reduce the number of residential care places, an increase in the number of people with chronic illness and dementia along with the costs associated with caring for these people at home, means that nursing and residential homes will continue to play an important role in the care and support system (DHSSPS, 2012b). However, care home residents are a highly dependent and vulnerable group. Recent media reports and research highlighting examples of poor care and neglect have done little to allay the anxieties experienced by families who are considering this option or who already have a relative in a nursing or residential home (Centre for Policy on Ageing, 2012). Therefore, the overall aim of this scheme is to improve the quality of life in nursing and residential homes by implementing an evidence-based programme of best practice and person-centred care. Specific objectives include to:

- synthesise the evidence for best practice by mapping the transferable knowledge against existing quality indicators;
- empower leadership within the care home sector by educating and supporting managers to facilitate change;
- support residents, relatives and staff to implement a range of person-centred initiatives around four key themes: facilitating a positive transition for residents and relatives, maintaining dignity and identity, sharing decision making and creating and maintaining community links.
- create and share evidence-based resources to improve quality of life in nursing and residential homes while minimising duplication of effort;
- develop and extend networks to support best practice;
- maintain momentum and influence mainstream practice by disseminating good practice through seminars, conferences and publications.

The proposed knowledge transfer will impact on care home residents, relatives, staff and other groups and individuals who interface with care homes including commissioners, regulators, advocacy

groups, the Health and Social Care Board, health and social care trusts and the general public. The likely impact includes (1) improvement in quality of life for care home residents, relatives and staff, (2) reduction in the number of inappropriate hospital admissions from care homes as a result of greater collaboration, (3) support for policy documents and regulatory standards which recommend greater choice, involvement and control for services users, (4) improved partnerships as a result of stakeholders working towards a common goal and (5) the promotion of care homes as a positive lifestyle choice when care cannot be provided at home.