Care Home Cwtch: an innovative response to support care home managers during challenging times (Covid-19 pandemic)

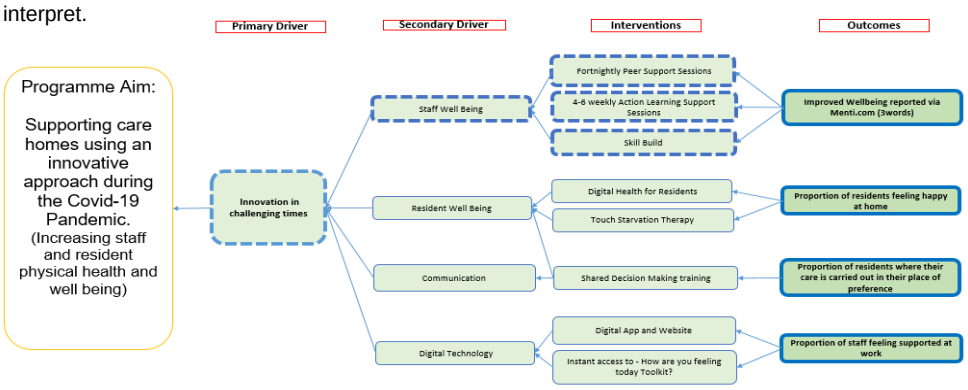
Rosalyn Davies, Programme Lead,
Joanne Powell, Senior Improvement Manager,
Asha Halborg, Improvement Manager,
Improvement Cymru, Public Health Wales

Understanding the Problem

The Problem: Social care providers support and deliver care to the most vulnerable in society. This includes those living with complex medical conditions and cognitive impairment in care homes across Wales. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on this population group and has brought about many challenges not only for care home staff but also for residents. These include:

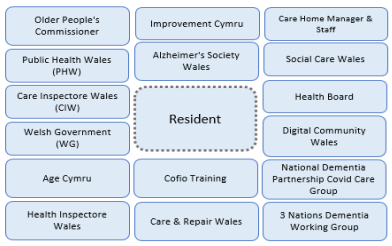
- Increased stress levels for care home managers and staff
- Confusion around sampling and testing
- Impact from social distancing on resident's mental well-being

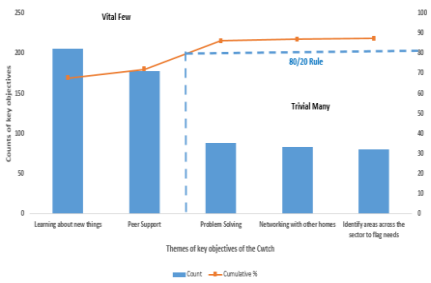
Although a large amount of guidance and information was made available to care homes from public bodies. These were communicated through multiple channels, which care homes found difficult to interpret.



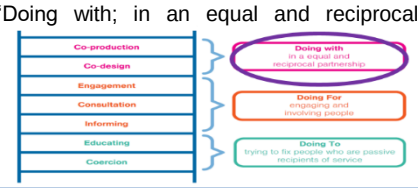
Involving Others

Stakeholder Engagement: Care Home Cymru partnered with stakeholders to deliver a digital platform that offers peer support to care home managers. A communication plan was developed to reflect all relevant stakeholder information and facilitation on the agreed activities. The initial scoping exercise was problematic due to the lack of a robust and up to date email distribution list of all care homes across Wales. Hence only 147 care homes were contacted initially. Of those, 89% (131) requested a network for sharing and supporting different ways of working during the Covid-19 pandemic. Key themes are highlighted in the chart on the right =>>>>>>>>>>





Co-production Ladder: This innovative work stream sits within 'Doing with; in an equal and reciprocal partnership'.



Aim: What are you trying to accomplish?

The **aim** of the Cwtch is to support Care Homes across Wales to better manage the daily activities of the home during the Covid-19 pandemic through learning and sharing. The objectives of the network are to:

- share practical day to day solutions
- problem solving to support improvements and innovations
- support and offer peer supervision for staff within the sector
- support care and better outcomes for vulnerable residents, this includes oral health, infection prevention and control and the early detection of the unwell resident

Measures: How will we know a change is an improvement?

Outcome Measures:

- **Short Term:** To increase the number of care homes that engage with the Care Home Cwtch from 13% to 50% by March 2021.
- **Long Term:** To sustain the learning and sharing for the 89% of care homes who expressed an interest, by maintaining fortnightly attendance at the information and skills sessions by October 2021.

Process measures will focus on:

- Increase the percentage of care home managers in attendance verses registered to attend the Cwtch Peer Support
- Increase the percentage of care home staff in attendance verses registered to attend the Cwtch Info & Skills

Unintended Consequences to include or not limited to:

- The number of times a care home was unable to attend the session due to technological issues
- The number of repeated themed sessions due to demand

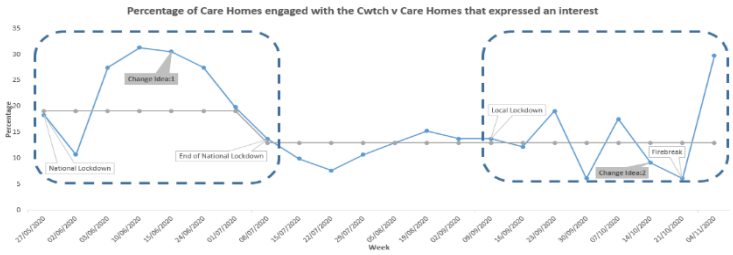
Baseline Data: The initial scoping exercise with 147 care homes provided our baseline.

Changes: what changes can we make that will result in an Improvement?

Change Idea 1: Change the focus to incorporate information and skill build sessions for the wider care home team. Themed sessions on mouthcare,infection, prevention and control, early recognition of deterioration, Covid-19 sampling and testing, future care planning, resident safety day (World Patient Safety) and wellbeing. All delivered by key stakeholders.

Change Idea 2: Change the format of the peer support sessions. Care home managers requested to align and engage with the same manager for each session. This would allow them to connect and build more robust relationships to share sensitive issues in a confidential and safe space.

Data vs. Measures: Outcome Measure Short Term: To increase the number of care homes that engage with the Care Home Cwtch from 13% to 50% by March 2021.

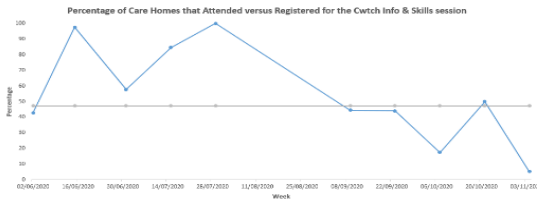


Results: The above graph highlights the percentage of care homes engaged out of the original 131 that expressed an interest. It is recognised, session engagement increased in line with higher prevalence rates of Covid-19 and restrictions.

Process Measure:

1. Percentage of care home managers in attendance verses registered to attend the Cwtch Peer Support.
2. Percentage of care home staff in attendance verses registered to attend the Cwtch Info & Skills.

Results: Data on attendance levels for care home managers at the Cwtch peer support is highlighting variation. However data collated for the information and skill sessions illustrate a decline in attendance due to care home staff shortages. See graph on the right **=>>>>>>>**



Outcome Measure Long Term:
To sustain the learning and sharing for the 89% of care homes who expressed an interest, by maintaining fortnightly attendance at the Cwtch by October 2021.
Word cloud illustrates manager's feedback on attending the Cwtch. **=>>>>>>>**

Reflection and the next steps

A **SWOT analysis** was undertaken for the mid stage evaluation of the project. This includes but not limited to:

STRENGTHS:

- They have acknowledged 'connecting with other care homes' is one of the key strengths in attending the Cwtch.
- A **virtual platform** was created to connect with care home managers and staff who we wouldn't ordinarily have been able to connect with.
- Information and skills session delivered swiftly in response to the request of the care homes.

WEAKNESS:

- The care home operational pressures due to Covid-19 has been a common theme. This has had a significant impact on care home manager's availability to attend the Care Home Cwtch.
- Technical issues; network capacity, digital applications, IT equipment and the practical application to attending our virtual sessions, resulted in care homes having to learn very quickly but not always successfully.

OPPURTUNITIES:

- Opportunity to engage with other care homes across Wales.
- Linking with other organisation i.e. HEIW , CIW, SCW for a 'Once for Wales' virtual platform for the care sector to access.
- Offer care homes a weekly 20min 'espresso bullet' update. This would require good communication strategy plan with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales.

THREATS:

- Covid-19 fatigue, winter pressures and the flu season will undoubtedly have an impact
- Staffing levels – staff shortages due to sickness or self-isolation requirements

Reflection and for future consideration:

The above SWOT analysis highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the programme which we acknowledge. We will build upon this learning as we continue to support this sector, continue working toward to our long-term outcome whilst informing our substantive programme of work for Welsh Government. We will seek to establish the priority issues and concerns that motivate care home managers to attend sessions. Regular check-ins will be enable us to ensure that the Cwtch content is focused to the needs of our care homes, and will also demonstrate whether we have given sufficient knowledge to help managers to resolve issues in order to focus on new priorities. To date, the majority of activities that have been delivered have been to care home staff. Reflecting on these activities, Care Home Cymru recognise there is a need for a work stream that centres around the well-being of residents specifically. The recommendations are for Care Home Cymru to deliver a programme of work that improves the emotional well-being of residents by reducing 'touch starvation' and 'social isolation' in direct response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Contact information:
https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/
https://twitter.com/ImprovementCym

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