

**Background** Inappropriate admissions to hospital from care homes at the end-of-life (EoL), identified within the UK Department of Health's End-of-Life Care (EoLC) Strategy resulted in the call for improved education surrounding EoLC for care home staff. In response, the *Six Steps to Success*, an organisational change programme, was developed for use with care home staff. The aim of the programme is to ensure all residents receive high quality EoLC provided by a care home that encompasses the philosophy of palliative care and that allows people to die where they choose.

**Aims** To explore the impact of the *Six Steps to Success* programme on EoLC in care homes in Northwest England.

**Methods** The mixed-method evaluation consisted of three phases; i) examination of audit data collected on care homes from cohort 1 that had completed the programme by November 2012 (quality markers and measures; post death information; knowledge skills and confidence audit); ii) questionnaires (n=16) and interviews (n=9) with Six Steps Facilitators (N=18) and iii) case studies on care homes (n=6), randomly chosen from a selection matrix of homes that had completed the programme and volunteered to take part taking account of geographical spread (urban/rural) and type of care home. Analysis involved descriptive statistical comparisons and frequencies; qualitative data were subject to content analysis to identify themes.

**Results** All care homes demonstrated improvements in Advance Care Planning (ACP). Knowledge skills and confidence around EoLC improved markedly amongst care home staff, with 92% improvement for Spirituality skills and 79% improvement for ACP knowledge. Residents dying in their preferred place of death increased from 81.5% to 83.1%.

**Conclusions** EoLC in care homes has undoubtedly improved. The *Six Steps to Success* programme has helped care home staff deliver better end-of-life care for their residents ensuring their wishes and preferences at end-of-life are met.

P 048

**EMPOWERING CARE HOME STAFF TO DELIVER QUALITY END OF LIFE CARE: THE IMPACT OF THE SIX STEPS TO SUCCESS PROGRAMME ON END OF LIFE CARE IN CARE HOMES IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND**

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