

Case Study



Airedale telehealth hub: Using modern technology to enhance health in care homes

Our values:
clinical engagement, patient involvement,
local ownership, national support

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Using modern technology to enhance health in care homes

The vanguard is harnessing the full potential of modern technology called ‘telehealth’ or ‘telemedicine’ to improve the quality of life and end of life care for nursing and care home residents across Yorkshire and Lancashire.

The team has also been chosen by NHS England to spearhead the development of ‘social movements’ in health and care, with a focus on dementia.

The vanguard and the people it serves

The vanguard is led by doctors, nurses and other health and social care professionals from a partnership of organisations including three hospitals, four clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), three councils, community healthcare providers, IT partners, numerous GP practices, GP networks and independent care home providers.

Its main focus is on the 7,687 residents living in 248 residential and nursing homes in Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale, Craven and East Lancashire.

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What is changing?

New online technologies including live video links and health monitoring equipment are being used to give care homes direct access to support from healthcare professionals around the clock.

Known as telehealth or telemedicine, this easy to access, online support helps staff pick up and address any health issues as early as possible and deliver more specialist support into care homes.

A secure video link gives staff and patients immediate access to a ‘hub’ of senior nurses for advice and support, and the health professionals can monitor people on screen and make early decisions about any treatment needed.

The technology is now in place in 217 care homes across the vanguard, helping residents to remain active and independent – including those with breathing problems, heart conditions and dementia – and reducing hospital admissions, A&E attendance and GP visits.

The information technology partners in the vanguard are also developing a ‘real-time’ shared patient record so that all the health and care professionals working with a patient can see their up to date notes, supporting safer, quicker care.



In a separate part of the vanguard's work, the team is working with the Alzheimer's Society across local communities to improve health and wellbeing with a focus on dementia, looking specifically at getting serious about prevention of ill health, empowering people in their own health and care and engaging communities through actions such as volunteering.

Key benefits

- Improved support for care homes will reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and increase residents' independence.
- Engaging local communities in better managing their own health will reduce reliance on health and care services.

Telemedicine video link leads to prompt stroke treatment

The new telemedicine facility being used by care homes is supporting staff to offer quicker, safer care when a patient becomes unwell.

In one case, an 86-year-old nursing home resident suddenly collapsed and developed left-sided weakness and a facial droop and became incoherent with slurred speech. He suffered from dementia but was normally alert, mobile and relatively well.

Staff at the home made an urgent video call to a senior nurse in the telemedicine hub based at Airedale General Hospital.

The nurse Rachel Ford said: "I was able to see immediately from his symptoms that it was highly probable that the patient had suffered a stroke."

Rachel kept the nursing home staff and the patient in view on the video-link and called 999 for an ambulance. She continued to monitor the patient and give support and advice to the carers until the paramedics arrived.

Hospital staff confirmed the patient had suffered a stroke, but thanks to the early diagnosis and treatment of his symptoms he was able to receive thrombolysis (clot-busting) treatment, which is only effective if given within four and a half hours of the onset of stroke symptoms.

Rachel added: "The prompt actions of the care home staff meant the patient was given an early diagnosis, allowing him to receive potentially lifesaving treatment that also helped prevent a lifelong, severe disability after his stroke."

The resident was admitted to hospital for overnight monitoring and just four hours after the initial video link alert, he was sitting up in bed, drinking a cup of tea and asking if he could go home. He was discharged home a few days later having made an almost complete recovery.



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