

MEDICINES OPTIMISATION

What was the issue?

- Each care home resident in Hertfordshire takes seven prescribed medicines a day on average and around half do not take their medicines as intended.
- Elderly patients are a vulnerable group because they have multiple co-morbidities, they react to medicines in a different way to younger people and the cumulative side effects of multiple medicines can cause further issues, such as falls.
- Care home residents are three times as likely to be admitted to hospital as other over 65-year-olds in the county.
- Medicines are often over-ordered leading to wastage.



Eleesha Pentiah, Vanguard pharmacist visits Burleigh House

Case study

Puja Vyas is one of our care home pharmacists. She explained that the Vanguard training helps care home staff to better understand complex needs. One of the training strands is nutrition. Puja has seen some excellent examples of this knowledge helping to reduce unnecessary medicines:

“ At Stanborough Lodge care home, the nutrition champion has created fortified smoothies to replace costly supplements for some residents and laxatives for others. This is showing really good results in patients' health and wellbeing. This is a completely new way of working for us and it is proving to be really beneficial in lots of ways. Sitting down with the GP, carers and complex care champions in one room is extremely valuable. ”

How did we tackle the problem?

The Vanguard programme employs four pharmacists and one pharmacy technician to work with 40 care homes to improve the way that residents' medicines are prescribed and monitored.



The team reviews medication – supported by real-time access to patient records. Residents, their families and care home staff also take part in reviews.

Our pharmacists check each medicine prescribed is still needed and is working as it should. They look for drugs which may interact with each other or increase the risk of someone falling, and work with GPs to stop these where appropriate, or find alternatives. The pharmacist meets with care home staff and the GP that works with that home to discuss the results.

Once agreed by all, the recommendations are explained to each resident, community pharmacist and recorded in the patient's care plan and GP record.

Key facts

Since December 2015, our care home pharmacy team has:

- reviewed **1,426** patients and **13,786** medicines
- stopped **2,238** unnecessary medicines including **681** with a falls risk.
- saved **£354,498** in drug costs
- saved an estimated **£650,000** in hospital admission costs

Benefits

Reduces:

- medication errors and near misses
- medicine waste
- admissions to hospitals from care homes
- the likelihood of falls
- levels of inappropriate prescribing of antipsychotics