Project learning

Improving end of life care through better integration: supporting front line workers

A Health Education North East Central and East London (HENCEL) funded project delivered by Skills for Care in London and the South East with Skills for Health and the National Council for Palliative Care

April 2015
Project learning

Additional funding enabled a second phase of the project to be run in the 14-15 financial year. This second phase of the project covered the remaining 3 LA areas – Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. Sessions for champions and further learning and development sessions were delivered and the learning from these was fed back to the London social care EoLC network. In addition accredited training opportunities were offered, the project resources were widely disseminated and the networks developed in phase 1 were built on and expanded.

The reach of the project has continued to expand. Between late 2013 and March 2015:

- 75 people were involved as champions
- 344 people took part in learning and development sessions for front line workers.
- 41 completed accredited qualifications (27 achieved the level 2 Award in Awareness of End of Life Care, 4 Hospice staff were trained as assessors and 10 champions trained in action learning facilitation)
- 120 joined the virtual network
- The resources on the websites (available from mid Oct 2014) received around 1,320 ‘hits’ and over 1,200 hard copies of DVDs with the resources on were distributed.
- The six key messages from the project were incorporated into the London EoLC charter (each London borough Director of Social Services is expected to sign up to this.)
- The project was presented at a range of events and conferences with high numbers in attendance
- Jewish Care champions helped produce an additional resource ‘Faith perspective: supporting Jewish people with life limiting conditions, and at the end of life’
- The project has been used as a case study in ‘Working together for better end of life care: a project bringing together people from different backgrounds to support them in developing integrated front line practice’.

Learning points

In addition to the learning outlined in the evaluation report written in July 14, the following points may be useful for anyone considering developing work in this area:

- Co-production approaches enable sharing of knowledge and expertise and avoid hierarchy of roles / assumption of who has knowledge.
Involvement of experts by experience is really important as they can and often want to contribute to the ongoing learning of practitioners.

Improving integration doesn't have to cost a great deal of money; it's about doing things in a different way – if you put the right people in a room together they will learn from each other they will learn about each other, they will begin to understand each other and they will choose to work together.

The only person who knows the whole picture is the person receiving services and what matters to them is what matters – encouraging practitioners to understand this and listen and take account of someone’s wishes more will have a big impact.

Understanding your own and other’s roles is difficult and opportunities to explain roles to each other are rare. The person receiving end of life care may be involved with over 10 different professionals and for them and their carers – as well as for the workers, clarity about roles is essential.

Workers often don’t feel confident in their knowledge and skills around EoLC – offering training opportunities can enhance their confidence, knowledge and skills enormously and when these training opportunities mix people from different roles the impact is even greater. Assumptions should not be made about what others know/are skilled at or are confident with. Aspects of end of life care can be challenging for everyone. Everyone has something to learn, and to teach. Experience, properly harnessed, can make a valuable contribution to the evolving body of knowledge about integrated working.

Participating in training and being able to take time out of work is increasingly difficult in the context of cuts and reduced capacity. Development of learning resources and online materials enables greater numbers to access the learning.

Resources to help people develop their practice are always welcomed and when based on people’s real experiences they have greatest impact. Signposting is needed to the range of resources available.

More resources are needed around meeting the EoLC requirements and needs for members of particular communities – we don’t all want or need the same!

Networks cannot be imposed; if people are to work together in their daily practice they need the opportunity to build their own informal networks.

The hospices are ideally placed to run training programmes delivering the accredited EoL qualifications to front line workers.

Linking into other work being done and working collaboratively where possible ensures greater synergy and is more cost effective for all.
**Project links**

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**Partner organisations**
Flix Films http://www.flixfilms.com or email admin@flixfilms.com
NCPC http://www.ncpc.org.uk
Coordinate my Care http://coordinatemycare.co.uk/ 020 7811 8513
HENCEL https://ncel.hee.nhs.uk/
Jewish Care www.jewishcare.org.uk phone 020 8922 2222 or email helpline@jcare.org

**Links**
The project resources can be found through any of these links:
Skills for Health http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/projects/item/147-end-of-life-care
The National Council for Palliative Care http://www.ncpc.org.uk/working-together-resource-pack
If you are interested in the making of “It helps to talk” Flix has made a short film about this, it can be found at: www.flixfilms.com/portfolio/making-helps-talk/#.VRlOTPnF9vA
Flix’s films have several films with an end of life care focus such as “I didn’t know that” about a Muslim family’s experience of the death of a family member, and Kate’s Story, a documentary about a young doctor who is herself dying www.flixfilms.com/portfolio/
Dying Matters www.dyingmatters.org