Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network

Docobo™
towards a better quality of life

Docobo®: technology to better support care services

Summary
Docobo has been providing remote monitoring solutions to health and social care since 2001 and is extremely proud to be working in partnership with Kent and Medway CCG (KMCCG) and KSS AHSN on this new and innovative shared vision: utilising technology to better support services in proactively delivering more responsive and efficient care.

RESTORE2™ is a paper-based physical deterioration and escalation tool, which is used within care homes and was developed by NHS West Hampshire CCG. RESTORE2, together with the use of NEWS2, can provide a common language across healthcare and can be used to support carers to recognise deterioration, assess the risk, and act on the findings [6].

Docobo has developed a digitalised version of RESTORE2 which can be used via DOC@HOME® in residential care settings, improving the safety and wellbeing of the residents, as well as reducing workload for both carers and GPs. KMCCG's aim is to implement digitalised RESTORE2 in as many care homes as possible across Kent and Medway, gaining the benefits of a secure and efficient model for managing deterioration at scale.

The challenge
The care home sector already faced enormous challenges prior to the pandemic; ongoing financial pressures, a narrow provider market, resistance to scale innovation or engage community assets, a hugely undervalued workforce and increasing workforce shortages [4]. Brexit added uncertainty around the status of thousands of EU workers in this sector [1], immediately followed by the pandemic, which magnified all these issues, while local authorities are financially exhausted. The need to support providers to operate safe and quality services has never been greater.

Current figures show more than 400,000 people living in care homes in the UK [7], of which there are increasing levels of frailty, complex health care needs, dementia, and disability [1]. GPs have been enduring their own workforce and funding crisis which has had a negative impact on the provision available for care home residents, resulting in less accessible healthcare, more acute hospital admissions, and increased morbidity [1]. Those working within the sector have described the current situation as 'grim, difficult, and relentless' [3].

This evidences the need for a radical reassessment of care pathways and the uptake of innovative new solutions to address these very real challenges. NHSE met this need with 'The Framework for Enhanced Health in Care Homes -version 2' [5] (EHCH) and the national recognition of the benefits of using RESTORE2 within care home settings [6]. Supporting care homes to effectively adopt these changes during such financial and operationally demanding times is essential, and technology can

certainly offer some much-needed relief to the workload, now and for the ongoing business model.

The solution

The aim of digitising RESTORE2 was to improve the reliability and efficiency of using the tool while reducing workload for carers and clinicians. Carers can answer the structured set of questions on a device which notifies a clinician within minutes of any deterioration or carer concerns, providing the clinician with relevant and real-time data which enables them to make better informed and timely clinical decisions and provide more meaningful interactions with the resident.

The DOC@HOME remote monitoring system is extremely flexible and can be applied to an unlimited number of service models. Carers use DocoboAPP™ on any smart device (Android or iOS) to capture the soft signs, vital signs and any other observations or concerns. The information automatically and securely transfers to the DOC@HOME system where it can be immediately viewed by monitoring clinicians and alerts are automatically generated as required; additionally, an alert email provides a flexible and reliable mechanism for notifying the primary care teams. Clinicians are automatically sent a report of any data that generated alerts and can seamlessly access the DOC@HOME 'vWard' (clinicians' portal) via EMIS, enabling them to immediately view previous readings which are presented in a format to easily identify trends.

Impact

Care homes that have implemented this system have fed back on a wide range of benefits. A huge benefit of using DOC@HOME is that it saves time for the carer trying to contact the GP by phone, and for the GP who may have difficulty getting hold of the appropriate carer when returning a call (so called 'telephone tennis').

RESTORE2 is an extremely useful resource for encouraging more accurate and relevant information to be collected by the carer and presented to the GP, increasing the skills and confidence of the carer while avoiding the time-wasting task of being asked to collect additional readings to inform an appropriate clinical decision. Digitalising this process increases the reliability and speed as well as reduces the paperwork, administrative tasks, and risks associated with paper-based systems.

Care homes that have implemented this system benefit from an increase in digital maturity, which also contributes to positive CQC assessments.

Contact

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2. https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/social-care/survey-reveals-stark-staffing-challenges-facing-care-services-20-10-2021/
3. https://www.nationalcareforum.org.uk/ncf-press-releases/just-grim-difficult-and-relentless/
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