

Engaging Care Homes

in Speech & Language Therapy Research

in North Tyneside

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Swallowing problems are common in older care home residents, and a major source of referrals to Speech and Language Therapy.

The Swallow Screening in Care Homes study tests the effectiveness of a new swallow screening tool to be used by trained nursing homes staff to enable appropriate management of less severe problems within the care home setting.

To date, 81 staff from 14 care homes have been trained and are actively engaged in research; 147 residents have given consent into the study, with 116 out of the target 182 completing the assessment process. In addition, the study has enhanced research knowledge and skills of the clinical SLT department.

Objectives

1. Increase the visibility of AHP leaders in research, and strengthen AHP research capacity
2. Through a collaborative approach, as recommended by ENRICH, we have engaged with care home settings to enable staff and residents to be research-active
3. Demonstrate that support from research networks has been crucial to the development and delivery of this project

Challenges

Lack of SLT time and research experience

Engaging care home staff in research due to multiple care providers, complex working environments and staff turn-over.

Training for care home staff organised to fit around shift patterns and improve knowledge and skills of all staff

Consent and recruitment due to lack of capacity, frailty and rapid change in health status.

Solutions

Researchers supported by £15000 award from the Northumbria Trust Bright Charity to allow SLTs to deliver training and assess participants, and 0.5 PA NIHR Clinical Research Network Greenshoots award for Principal Investigator.

New links between SLT service, R&D Department, and CRN community research nurses.

Study design enables participation of residents with and without capacity to consent

This project was jointly developed by working SLTs in collaboration with care home managers and staff, addressing a joint desire to improve access to SLT and outcomes for residents

Conclusion

We have successfully engaged with care home settings with support from the local NIHR Clinical Research Network to both deliver the SSinCH study and develop research capacity in Speech and Language Research in this non-traditional research environment.