



Boost Box project

Introduction

The scale of Malnutrition within Sheltered Housing in Scotland is currently unknown. Previous research has identified that 14% of older adults living in Sheltered Housing across England are malnourished (BAPEN, 2009). It has also been estimated that at any one time, malnutrition affects as many, if not more people in sheltered housing than in hospital. Similar statistics can be applied to sheltered housing across Scotland.

As such, it is important to raise awareness of the problem of malnutrition in sheltered housing and provide education and brief interventions to identify and manage those at risk.

One way this can be done is to use the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist, which is a simple tool to help raise awareness and identify the potential risk of undernutrition, and offer guidance on next steps (1). Anyone can fill in the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist, including patients, their families, the staff and volunteers supporting them. It is primarily intended for people over 65 living in the community.

Research shows that people who are underweight or malnourished visit their GP twice as often and are more likely to be admitted to hospital (2). The Patients Association Nutrition Checklist helps address the problem of undernutrition by:

- Encouraging conversations and raising awareness of the potential for undernutrition
- Helping identify those likely to be at risk using a simple tool
- Providing basic advice and signposting to information and sources of help for those likely to be at risk.

Aim of Test of Change

This Test of Change aims to use section A & B of the Patient Association Nutrition Checklist, to help with early identification of older adults at risk of undernutrition in Sheltered Housing. Individuals identified as being at risk will be offered a wellbeing check and a nutritional boost pack.

Additionally it aims to reduce social isolation, and support individuals at risk of becoming malnourished via an awareness raising session and follow up visits.

Objectives

- Increase in behaviour change around eating habits to prevent long term risk of malnutrition
- Increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of malnutrition
- Establish the prevalence of malnutrition within sheltered housing complexes through using the patient association checklist
- Bring individuals together to reduce social isolation through awareness sessions and follow up visits.

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Who?

This pilot will require collaboration between Eat Well Age Well and two Hanover Housing complexes in East-Renfrewshire. The test of change will also utilise Eating Well volunteers from the Eat Well Age Well project.

What?

Initially information letters about the awareness session and the Patient Association checklists will be sent out to the residents within the two complexes. Flyers will also go out to their notice boards to promote the coffee morning.

A coffee morning will be held in each complex to raise awareness of the general principles of healthy eating, recognising signs and symptoms of malnutrition and Food First Advice on Thursday 26th August. The residents will be encouraged to take along the patient association checklist, and some will be available to fill out on the day with help from Eat Well Age Well volunteers.

The two Hanover Court complexes are;

- Elderslie – 45 flats - Session starting at 10.30 – 11.30
- Johnstone – 29 flats – Session starting at 14.00 – 15.00

The forms will be collated on the day. If residents are identified as being at risk, wellbeing checks will be given offering a nutritional boost pack and four follow up visits with the Eating Well volunteers.

The follow up visits will give the Eating Well volunteer the opportunity to support any individuals with further food first advice and signposting opportunities. E.g. Food Train, lunch clubs or other community support services.

Costings

- Marketing Materials (leaflets, posters, checklist)
- Coffee morning x 2 (2 areas)
- Nutritional boost pack snacks x 4 (1 boost pack each week, containing 7 snacks)
- Volunteer expenses (2 areas)

Evaluation Measures

Quantitative

- No of older people screened and brief interventions offered
- No nutritional boost packs
- Type of snacks taken from boost pack
- No of Malnutrition leaflets taken
- No of older people attending coffee morning

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Qualitative

- Volunteer log book from the two visits re: advice given/feedback from resident/observation from Eating Well volunteers.
- Follow up with key staff members re how the project has gone, any changes they have noticed in residents etc.

Follow up focus group to assess impact on individuals who received nutritional boost pack

- has the project made them incorporate a new snack into their diet?
- has the project increased awareness of signs and symptoms of malnutrition?
- Are you interested in further information in regards to eating and drinking well?

Follow up group focus group with residents who attended the awareness session

- Did the session increase awareness of the general principles of healthy eating?
- Did the session increase awareness of signs and symptoms of malnutrition?
- Did the session raise awareness of other services to support older adults?
- Are you interested in further information in regards to eating and drinking well?

Patient checklist

- Did you find the checklist easy to complete?
- Did you find the tool useful?

References

1 Elia M, Stratton R. Geographical inequalities in nutrient status and risk of malnutrition among English people aged 65y and older. Nutr 2005; 21:1100-1106

2 Health economic impact of managing patients following a community-based diagnosis of malnutrition in the UK; Guest et al; Clin Nutr. 2011 Aug 30(4):422-9. doi: 10.1016/j.clnu.2011.02.002. Epub 2011 Mar 13