

Making change last: sustaining interventions in care homes

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Sustaining interventions in care homes initiated by quality improvement projects: a qualitative study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction Inadequate and varied quality of care in care homes has led to a proliferation of quality improvement (QI) projects. This study examined the sustainability of interventions initiated by such projects.

Method This qualitative study explored the sustainability of seven interventions initiated by three QI projects between 2016 and 2018 in UK care homes and explored the perceived influences to the sustainability of interventions. QI projects were followed up in 2019. Staff leading QI projects (n=9) and care home (n=21, from 13 care homes) and healthcare (n=2) staff took part in semi-structured interviews. Interventions were classified as sustained if the intervention was continued at the point of the study. Thematic analysis of interview data was performed, drawing on the Consolidated Framework for Sustainability (CFS), a 40-construct model of sustainability of interventions.

Results Three interventions were sustained and four interventions were not. Seven themes described perceptions around what influenced sustainability: monitoring outcomes and regular check-in; access to replacement intervention materials; staff willingness to dedicate time and effort towards interventions; continuity of staff and thorough handover/inductions in place for new staff; ongoing communication and awareness raising; perceived effectiveness; and addressing care home priorities. All study themes fell within 18 of the 40 CFS constructs.

Discussion Our findings resonate with the CFS and are also consistent with implementation theories suggesting

Key messages

What is already known on this topic?

- Sustaining improvements to care is a challenge. The Consolidated Framework for Sustainability (CFS) describes factors that influence sustainability; generalisability of the CFS to care homes is not yet clear.

What this paper adds?

- Interventions initiated in care homes by quality improvement projects are not always sustained, and 18 (out of 40) CFS constructs influenced sustainability in care home settings.

How might this study affect research, practice or policy?

- Influences on sustainability are consistent with influences on implementation, and so those commissioning, funding and leading quality improvement projects should address sustainability during intervention implementation.

Background: Quality Improvement in care homes

PROSPER: Promoting safer provision of care for elderly residents



NEW CARE MODELS:

Vanguards - developing a blueprint for the future of NHS and care services



A key challenge: sustaining improvements

Sustaining improved care is a key challenge in the field of healthcare improvement (Dixon-Woods 2012)

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Narrative review

Ten challenges in improving quality in healthcare: lessons from the Health Foundation's programme evaluations and relevant literature

[Mary Dixon-Woods](#), [Sarah McNicol](#), [Graham Martin](#)

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Abstract



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Material



XML

The SUSTAIN Study aimed to:

- Examine the sustainability of interventions initiated during QI projects
- Explore the factors influencing sustainability

The SUSTAIN Study method

Followed up 3 quality improvement projects

Proactive Healthcare of
Older People in Care
Homes (PEACH)

Nottingham, UK
2016 – 2018



Safer Care Homes
(Safer Salford)

Salford, UK
2017-2018



Enhanced Health in
Care Homes
Vanguard

Nottingham
2015 – 2018



32 interviews with staff leading QI, and frontline care home and NHS staff

Thematic analysis used to analyse data

Results: intervention sustainability

Interventions

1. Multidisciplinary review meetings
2. **Nutritional support**
3. **'A red bag' to enhance communication between care homes and hospital**
4. **Telemedicine to facilitate clinical decision-making**
5. Pimp My Zimmer (falls prevention)
6. Floor sensor mat (falls prevention)
7. Luminous Loos (falls prevention)

**3 interventions
were sustained**

**4 interventions
were not
sustained**

Factors influencing intervention sustainability:

- Monitoring progress and regular check-ups
- Staff willingness to dedicate time and effort towards interventions
- Access to replacement intervention materials
- Continuity of staff and thorough handovers for new staff

"We have what we call flash meetings, daily meetings, so if there's ... we discuss any things, any changes at staff meetings"

"So you have to balance between what are the benefits, and what can we afford, in terms of staff and time and money". (Care home staff 21)

"I think sometimes with the Red Bags don't come back and we have to chase them, they get lost in the hospital or something. That affects using it again"

"When staff members have changed, they need to make sure things get passed to new staff"(Project staff 8)

Factors influencing intervention sustainability:

- Ongoing communication and awareness raising
- Perceived effectiveness
- Addressing care home priorities

After the project finishes people still need to talk about it and make sure it is kept 'live'. (Project staff 8)

If somebody was walking into the toilet and didn't really recognise what it was, they were actually looking at the toilet because obviously it was different colours. So it was like the rim of the toilet inside would be blue, or red, so rather than sitting on the toilet they were scared of it. (Care home staff 8)

It's a big priority in our care home (Care home staff 11)

Summary of findings

Out of 7 interventions followed up: 4 stopped, 3 were sustained.

Overall 7 themes described the perceived influences on sustainability;
the content of the 7 themes mapped onto 18 constructs in the
Consolidated Framework for Sustainability

Research implication: consider sustainability during implementation

Study themes are consistent with components of theories of implementation:

- Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (Kirk et al 2015),
- Quality Implementation Framework (Meyers et al 2012)
- Normalisation Process Theory (Murray 2010)
- Sustainability – a concurrent process which needs to take place alongside implementation
- Those commissioning and funding QI initiatives should not start until plans for their longer-term sustainability are in place



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Thank you for listening

Any questions?



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