BAPEN COVID-19 Service Improvement & Innovation Awards Entry Form

Please tick this box if you do not want your entry to feature on the BAPEN Website and social media channels ☐

Author(s):
N. Wayne, J. Solomon, S. Stenson, C. Shakespeare, and G.P. Hubbard.

Nutricia Ltd, White Horse Business Park, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 0XQ

Institution: Nutricia Homeward

Summary of the Service Improvement & Innovation:

Nutricia Homeward supports over 29,000 enterally fed patients at home by providing monthly stock check calls, prescription management, deliveries, training and clinical support. COVID-19 resulted in significant changes implemented at pace to continue to help hospitals discharge patients home safely and provide a regular service to existing patients.

Along with moving a team of over 100 patient coordinators to working from home, providing delivery drivers with PPE and training to keep everyone safe, and the organisation and movement of feeding pumps from the community into hospital ICU departments to support increased demand, the biggest changes made were by the Nutricia Homeward Nursing team. Nearly 30 contract addendums were introduced in consultation with HCPs to meet local NHS needs, these included extended working hours, especially over weekends and bank holidays, implementing agile discharge procedures to help free up hospital beds, placing and replacing nasogastric tubes and gastrostomy tubes in the community and numerous other activities which otherwise would result in hospital attendance.

Prior to COVID-19, the Nutricia Homeward App (a secure video call between Nutricia Homeward Nurses and patients) had mainly been used for "trouble shooting" advice, to provide immediate answers and reassurance if a patient had a clinical question or problem. Patients shielding and limited access in Care Homes meant that use of the App increased rapidly and therefore it was used for purposes ranging from discharge training to annual reviews.

Challenges faced & how they were overcome:

The priority for Nutricia Homeward during COVID-19 was to continue to provide support for Nutricia Homeward patients at home, keeping them away from hospital but also to keep patients as well as Nutricia Homeward Nurses safe. Robust processes for new ways of working were implemented, a comprehensive video was created to demonstrate clearly how to don and doff PPE and all 150 Nutricia Homeward Nurses attended virtual training to ensure they were fully confident with this prior to visiting patients at home.

Nutricia consulted regularly with the Care Quality Commission, Royal College of Nursing and Public Health England to keep up to date with emerging guidance. This supported an early decision that NG tube placement was an Aerosol Generating Procedure and therefore Nutricia

Homeward Nurses needed the appropriate PPE. This was especially important as the number of patients requiring NG placement at home increased during the pandemic.

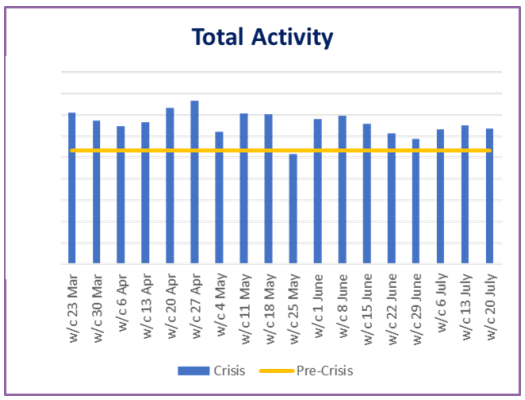
It soon became clear that additional information was required to help some patients manage simple procedures themselves as well as supporting HCPs who were working with enterally fed patients for the first time. Online material was made available in the form of 6 simple videos and "how to" pictorial guides demonstrating essential tube care.

As always, communication was key, and in a rapidly changing environment Nutricia needed to keep HCPs informed about what was new, coming or changing. The local teams provided regular information through emails and phone calls, a weekly newsletter was developed along with e-learning, webinars and podcasts to provide essential educational content.

Evaluation & Outcomes:

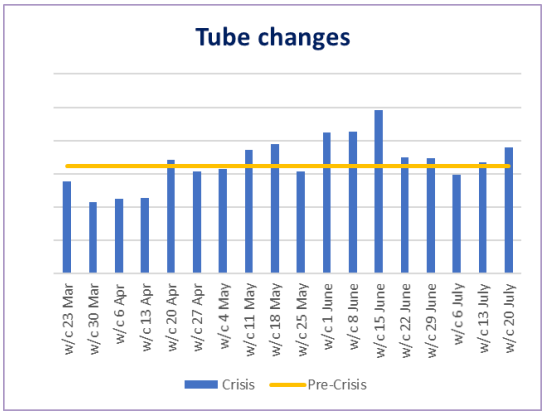
Nursing activity levels, i.e. the number of patient contacts undertaken each week by Nutricia Homeward nurses was monitored during the pandemic and except for the bank holiday week in May, activity was higher than usual (see Figure 1). This demonstrates the proactive approach the Nutricia Homeward Nursing team took to help keep patients feeding safely at home.

Figure 1. Total Nutricia Homeward Nurse activity during the COVID-19 peak



Nutricia Homeward App calls more than doubled during the COVID-19 outbreak, with 382 calls made in the last week of August 2020 and although face to face visits to conduct tube changes dropped below pre-crisis levels in March and April, these quickly returned to usual levels (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Face to face patient visits for tube changes during the COVID-19 peak



Nutricia Homeward patients have also been very positive about the support received during COVID-19. Overall satisfaction, as measured by the patient satisfaction survey has remained high throughout 2020, however in March and April, during the peak of COVID-19, satisfaction increased to 97% (from 95% in January and February 2020). This is testament to the hard work of everyone at Nutricia Homeward, from patient coordinators, nurses and delivery drivers.

Future Plans:

As we review what we have learnt over the past few months a few points become clear;

A local, flexible service to meet individuals needs continues to be required
We will continue to work closely with HCPs at a local level to understand what is required for their patients and how we can best support them. By doing so we will continue to provide flexible, tailored solutions.

Digital solutions are here to stay and can be developed further
Both patients and HCPs are now more familiar and confident in using technology. Telehealth and online information needs to be simple, easy to use and accessible. The Nutricia Homeward App has been a huge benefit for nurses and patients, and we are developing this further so that HCPs can also use it.
Online information and education needs to be relevant and easily accessible and we are reviewing future requirements. BrowseAloud (an online accessibility tool) is currently available on the Nutricia Homeward website however only a small number of HCPs are aware of and recommend this service to patients therefore greater communication about this is required.

Home working is possible for Nutricia Homeward patient coordinators
Although a move back to the Trowbridge office is planned, patient coordinators (who organise patient feed and ancillary deliveries) will be able to gain the work-life benefits of a more flexible approach to home working in the future.

Preparation for the future
During the peak of COVID-19, Nutricia Homeward needed to work with speed and agility to continue to meet patients and HCPs needs. We are currently analysing what worked well and

what could be improved as we move into scenario planning in preparation for the future. We have also rewritten our Business Continuity Plans to reflect how we manage a future pandemic.

Covid-19 has demonstrated that working together, in partnership, Nutricia Homeward and NHS HCPs can provide excellent patient care for home enterally tube fed patients.