INTRODUCTION

- Public Health England South West (PHESW) Health Protection Teams dealt with approximately 74 outbreaks of infections in care homes between October and December 2014.
- To help to reduce risks and to enhance management, a user-friendly outbreak pack was drafted in conjunction with care home managers and other community providers.
- Objectives were: to give clear and consistent advice to protect residents and staff from acquiring infection; to restrict spread; to clarify communication routes; and to provide information on common infectious diseases in care homes.
- As part of my Health Protection/Infection Prevention and Control secondment remit to South Gloucestershire Council, I was in an ideal position to lead on the development of this initiative.

METHODS

- The health protection nurse met with care home providers to scope the level of interest and enthusiasm; and contents and format were designed in conjunction with them and other community social care managers.
- Hard copies of packs were sent to all care homes in South Gloucestershire and was adapted for use in other South West localities.
- This was followed by a one day workshop to formally launch the pack and to obtain feedback from users.

RESULTS

- The project resulted in the creation of action cards and other outbreak management documents with advice on enhanced infection control precautions such as hand washing, use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), environmental cleaning, exclusion criteria, sampling and reporting process.
- The pack was widely welcomed with a majority of care homes reporting referring to the action cards; and these providers were also using the pack as a first-line document to help them to prevent and to manage outbreaks.

DISCUSSION

- The project will be formally reviewed from September 2016, following its launch in September 2015. It will be difficult to measure whether it has helped to reduce the number of outbreaks, although more providers were now aware of the need to report their outbreaks.

Declaration of conflicting interest:

- There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

REFERENCES


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