

A step-by-step guide to creating a community of care home managers in your local area

1 2 3 4 5

Managing a care home can be a very isolating experience. Building a supportive community of like-minded managers from care homes in your locality can provide you with an opportunity to share challenges and potentially identify new ideas and solutions to help you take your home forward.

Prepare

- # Consider who in the local area you might wish to connect with. Search www.carehome.co.uk/care_search.cfm for a list of homes and their contact details.
- # Think about what type of event you want, whether you meet in the pub, for instance, or in your care home.
- # How many managers you would wish to invite? Between 6- 8 is often viewed as the ideal number in terms of getting a good dialogue going.
- # Consider what might motivate people to meet with you. Perhaps communicate that this is an opportunity for care home managers to connect with one another. You may want to identify a common issue for discussion you feel everyone could relate to (e.g Safeguarding) or focus on one of the My Home Life themes as a starting point.

Build trust

- # The care home sector can sometimes feel very competitive and this may inhibit some managers from feeling able to share. Have a conversation about the purposes of the group and what needs to be in place to help people feel able to talk openly and honestly about their work.
- # Why not begin with an ice-breaker such as hearing from each other about what brought them into the care home sector?

Share

- # Sometimes people can fall into the habit of using such groups as a place for moaning about what isn't working well. Shape the discussions around a theme (e.g End of Life Care) by asking positive questions such as:
 - "What's working well?"
 - "What could be better?"
 - "How could we make it happen?"

Grow

- # Ask for a volunteer to host the next event in 6 weeks' time and set a date. Ask the group to suggest a question or issue to address at the next get together.
- # Ask the group to write down their contact information for the next event's host and think about creating an email group for easy communication between you.
- # Pass it on. Build the network slowly by extending your reach gradually. Keep it going!