



THE MOVEMENT MOVES TO LONDON

Care Home Managers assemble in Central London

On the 18th September 2013 nearly 60 care home managers came together to share practice, exchange ideas and connect with one another as a movement working together to deliver evidence-based and relationship centred care.

This was part of a project being delivered by *My Home Life* (www.myhomelife.org.uk), funded by City Bridge Trust. The *My Home Life* movement is all about working together to support care homes to be great places to live, die, visit and work. This event was co-created with the many care home managers in London with whom we have links. They told us that many care homes are often working in isolation of real support. They recognised the value of creating an event which brought care home managers together from across greater London to share and learn from each other and from the ideas that the *My Home Life* programme has gathered over the years.

What happened on the day?

Participants were presented with a free 'My Home Life Toolkit'. This innovative box of resources was created and tested by care home practitioners in partnership with the *My Home Life* team. The purpose of the Toolkit is to support better dialogue between residents, relatives and staff about their experiences of life in the care home and how they could collectively make it even better.



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To help practitioners fully understand how the toolkit could be used, a series of interactive sessions were put on:

Workshop A - Using 'Emotion Touchpoint Cards' and 'Caring Conversations'. Participants explored the value of the 'Emotional Touchpoint' cards to facilitate 'How to have Caring Conversations'.



These tools were designed to help managers engage with residents, relatives and staff in relation to how they feel about aspects of care home life in order to take forward sustainable improvement. Managers agreed that it was important to connect with people's feelings before trying to resolve issues/concerns. They also saw how the tool enabled staff to talk about the positive aspects of the home too. Some managers recognised their value in enhancing discussion at their relatives' group meetings.



Workshop B: Participants were introduced to the '**Best Practice in Care Homes' cards** in the Toolkit which can be used both in team meetings and in other aspects of quality improvement within the home.

Participants agreed that team meetings can be a great opportunity for managers to help staff reflect on their experience, celebrate the great work they are doing, feel motivated to work collectively, and take forward improvements in the home. They recognised that their staff meetings do not always work well - that the agenda is sometimes too overloaded with discussions on problems and issues in the home or in communicating new rules and policies. They agreed that sometimes it

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seems that these meetings do little more than further reduce the engagement and self-esteem of staff.

Asking staff to reflect and share 'What works well in the home?' in relation to the 8 My Home Life best practice themes was seen as a useful tip. Participants shared some other things that they did well such as using food, fun and games at the beginning of the meeting to help staff feel more valued and engaged. One participant shared how he brings musical instruments into the meeting room and everyone has a quick play together to help loosen the mood!

Workshop C: Connecting London Care Homes This workshop used the MHL's 'Host an Event Guide' (downloadable from our website). We discussed and shared ideas on how to host an event in order to

connect with other care home managers. Managers recognised the value of coming together to share best practice. Some managers were already involved in care home forums, while others had good peer-to-peer relationships with other managers that they could rely on for help. The remainder spoke honestly about how they felt they were less able to ask for help because of the challenges of competition and feelings of isolation. Some spoke about how managers tend to meet at 'provider forums'; however, these were not typically places where it was easy to be open and honest about the challenges that each care home faced.

We heard what a huge difference it can make to connect with other care home managers in order to deal with the complex and stressful role.

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In one area, managers were already meeting up. Through this they had developed a stronger voice in influencing wider decision-making in the borough.

Participants agreed that some small peer-led groups, where managers could come together in an positive and supportive environment, would be beneficial moving forward. Some participants agreed to take a lead pioneer role in helping to make this happen.

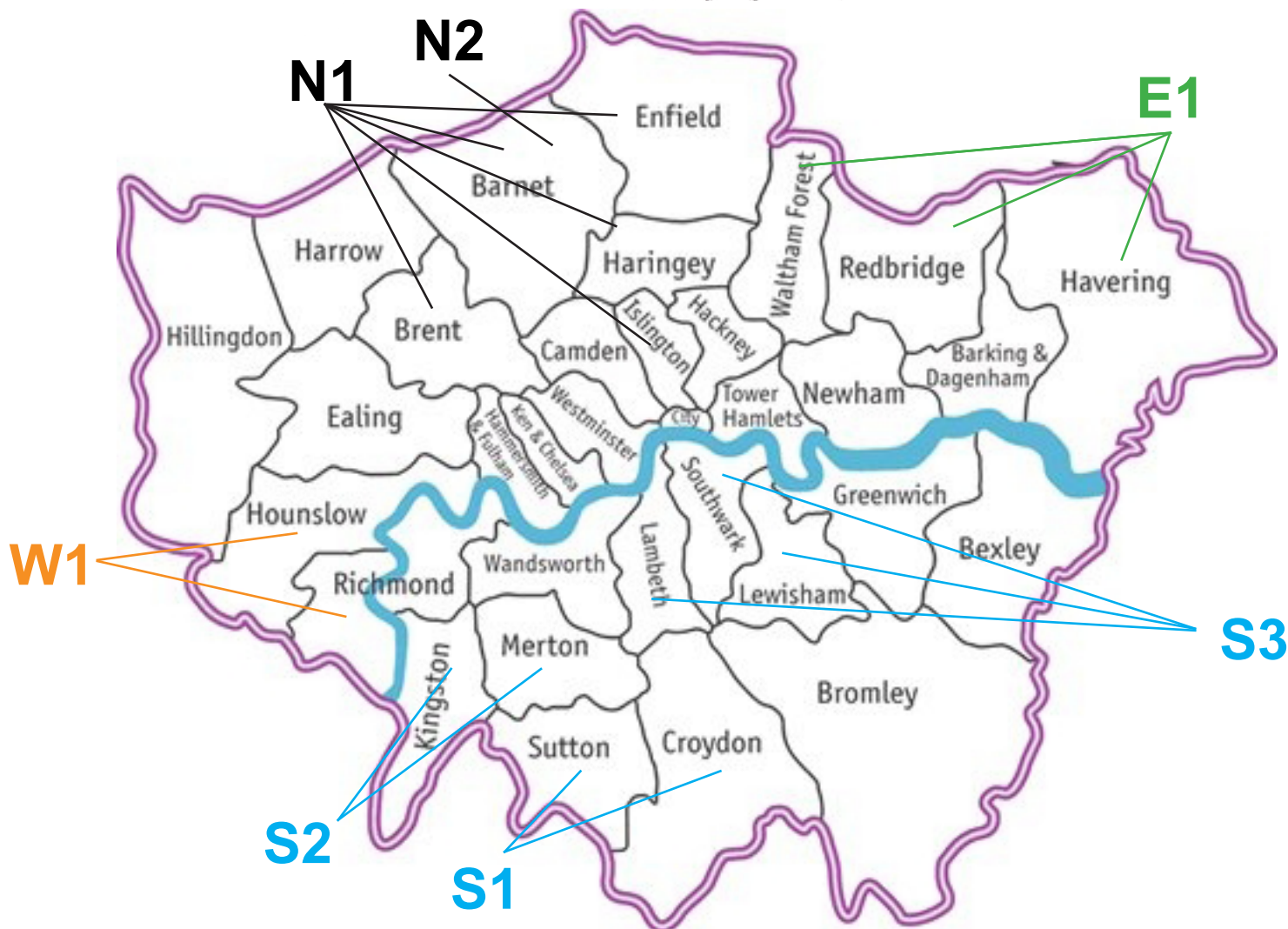
There were doubts about the ability for these groups to get going (and stay going) knowing the pressures for care home managers. Managers would like a *My Home Life* representative to facilitate these sessions, but if budgets did not allow, then they wanted to see how they got on self facilitating, using the MHL 'Host an Event' guide.

Since the event, *My Home Life* is looking to find ways to sustain the London movement. We will be working with the identified 'pioneers' to help them take forward their small groups. We are also looking to run London-wide get togethers every 6 months. In doing so, creating opportunities for the peer-to-peer groups to come together and exchange ideas about best practice and support each other to feed into the wider *My Home Life* movement.

If you were at the event - then thank you so much for making it such an incredible day. You are really at the heart of this movement. If you weren't able to make it, then you should have received a toolkit in the post. Please have a go and see how it can help you open up conversations for quality improvement.



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South

Philamena Ravanah	S1
Sunita Dookhit	
Kim Kerwood	
Christiana Sawyer	
Maria Rovelyn Hemmings	
Emmonue Torsoo	

Merci de Silva	S2
Lesley Carnegie	
Ajitha Kumar	
Helene Sessford	
Shaaron Caratella	

A Mc Cormack	S3
Susan Garton	
Lorna Thomas	
Simaon Pedzisi	
Sharon Stevens	
Beth Bowler	

North

Lucy Ncube	N1
Jan Lovett	
Manford Ncube	
Fatma Makalo	
Jasbir Singh	
Shiva Sheikholeslami	
Florence J Clarke	
Abingdon Awotago	

Contact Julie Hughes **N2**

West

Regina Mpartusa	W1
Lukas Higick	
Zoe Smith	
Elaine Robson	

East

Harpreet Mann	E1
Maureen Lewis	
Sharon Jolley	
Joanne Smart	
Carol Bryan	
Soniya Sanhu	
Permjit Mann	
Neville Bermudez	
Ashany Guyadhur	

These are the peer-to-peer groups that managers wanted to set up. Names in pink are the pioneers, who are taking responsibility for starting up their first group. Please contact us at mhl@city.ac.uk if you want to join a group. If not, set your own group up!

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Overall

All the care home managers felt the event would help them take forward quality improvement. 71% of managers felt that they had made 'a few new friends' and 29% 'loads of new friends' at this event. As we had such a great response, we ran a separate event for Barnet care homes, which gathered another 35 managers into the *My Home Life* movement.

Missed the event – but want to get involved?

If you are a care home manager in London, don't fret – you haven't missed out. The movement needs your energy and enthusiasm, so why not join?

If you want to connect with *My Home Life* and be a part of the growing movement in London to take forward evidence-based and relationship-centred practice in care homes, email us at mhl@city.ac.uk (using subject heading 'MHL London').

About the toolkit

My Home Life is distributing the toolkit to every care home in London. If by the end of October, you have not received it, please contact us at mhl@city.ac.uk.



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About My Home Life

My Home Life is a UK initiative promoting quality of life in care homes. As a social movement, *My Home Life* is working to ensure that all care homes are great places to live, die, visit and work. Our broad range of research and development activities aims to support care homes to deliver evidence-based and relationship-centred practice.

My Home Life is led by City University in partnership with Age UK and Dementia UK. *My Home Life* London was supported by City Bridge Trust. MHL is endorsed by the Relatives and Residents Association, together with all the national provider organisations that represent care homes across the UK: National Care Forum, English Community Care Association, Registered Nursing Home Association, National Care Association, Care Forum Wales, Scottish Care and Independent Health and Care Providers in Northern Ireland.

