

A multimodal, area B public health initiative of early engagement to support the management of potential outbreaks of infectious diseases in Residential Care Facilities (RCFs).

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Background/Goals

In preparation for winter surge, public health area B designed and implemented a multimodal communications strategy to engage with RCF managers. Our goals were to streamline the process and facilitate an enhanced understanding of their role and the applications of the HPSC guidance to manage outbreaks in their context with autonomy where appropriate. Also to maximise PH resources to enable response during surge.

Method

We created MDT working group to streamline PH response to outbreaks in RCF across Area B; agree email templates, respiratory testing strategies, standardised PH responses to notifications of outbreaks. Key messages in the guidance pertaining to testing, vaccination, isolation and chemoprophylaxis were compiled into infographics and circulated to each RCF. A series of webinars were provided targeted at RCFs on winter preparedness, respiratory diseases outbreak management, immunisation in healthcare workers, PH guidance updates. The team collaborated with community infection prevention and control, and COVID-19 response team colleagues and community health organisation leads.

Result

Survey of Area B health protection nurses demonstrated that the initiative enabled greater autonomy for RCF to manage their outbreaks, and also reduced resources required for RCF response by half when compared to winter 2021. The survey also proved that workload was reduced, resources were redirected to other health protection services, and eased transition to area wide working.

Conclusion

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The interventions empowered managers of RCFs to implement evidence-based approach to outbreak management that is informed by the guidance. Ultimately this result in greater availability of Public Health resources to provide bespoke and nuanced advice when more complex and challenging situations arise.