

# South London Care Home Pioneer Programme 2022: Cohort 4

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The South London Care Home Pioneer Programme is a nine-month programme, designed to improve the leadership skills and promote professional development of senior care home staff across South London, through face-to-face workshops, Action Learning Sets, mentor support, and a Service Improvement project.

## Background

The Pioneer Programme started in 2018. It is delivered by the Health Innovation Network (HIN) in partnership with My Home Life England (MHL). Over four separate cohorts, the programme has supported over 70 Pioneers from care homes in all 12 boroughs of South London.

The HIN is the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) for South London. The role of the HIN is to increase the spread and adoption of evidence-based health innovations across large populations at pace and scale. MHL is a charity working with care homes to promote best practice and improve quality of life for those living, visiting, and working in care homes; these aims are achieved by delivering high-quality training, consultancy, research and social action.

## Introduction

Senior care home staff often work in isolation from colleagues in other parts of health and social care.

The Pioneer Programme was set up to promote professional development and improve leadership skills of care home staff across London to strengthen the workforce and improve quality of care for people living in care homes. The programme also aimed to create peer-support networks, providing the Pioneers with a safe and open space to share challenges and struggles.

## Method

To support the Pioneers to improve as leaders, and develop the relevant skills to support their care home teams we delivered multiple workstreams (see table below). Each year the content of the programme has developed and improved following feedback from the Pioneers. This year saw the introduction of a formal Service Improvement project, with mentor support to further assist the Pioneers to implement and manage a small change project within their homes. We completed the nine-month programme with a Celebration event where Service Improvement posters were presented.

Workstream	No.	Summary
Workshops	4	Four face-to-face workshops were delivered between March and May. They focussed on managing self, managing change, managing others, and service improvement.
Action Learning Sets	9	Nine online Action Learning Sets which involved experiential learning through a continuous process of action, learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of improving practice.
Mentor calls	2	Pioneers were supported with two 1:1 phone (or video) calls with an assigned mentor.
Service Improvement Project	1	The Pioneers were supported in carrying out a Service Improvement project in their homes. The projects ranged from improving hydration, to managing deterioration. The Pioneers were then asked to complete a poster to display their project

## Results and Conclusions

Cohort 4 of the Pioneer Programme recruited 36 Pioneers. 30 Pioneers participated in the complete programme. 18 Pioneers produced a Service Improvement project poster which was displayed at the Celebration event to guests and funders of the programme. The Pioneers gave feedback at the Celebration day on their experience of the programme. One of Pioneers explained that the programme had give them a "safe space for creative minds and innovation ideas, where we learn to successfully implement change".

The Pioneer's Service Improvement projects demonstrated positive impacts on the care homes involved. For example, one project focused on improving the end of life care provided to care home residents, by introducing a new process ensure residents at the end of their life were referred to palliative care, rather than emergency services. This change saw a reduction in the number of hospital and palliative admissions, showing the increase in patients being cared for within the home in their last phase of life. This has had a very positive impact for relatives, residents and staff as they have felt their relatives had a more dignified death and were more involved in the process (see examples of other projects in the graphic, and also [here](#) in a poster booklet).

The programme has improved care home managers' confidence, communication, and knowledge in how to be an effective leader. Pioneers said that the programme had "increased my self-confidence and improved my listening skills", and they learn a lot of "solution finding, problem solving, and conflict resolution". In addition, another Pioneer said that the programme has "boosted my confidence, skills, and knowledge in working jointly with the multidisciplinary team. It has empowered me to exercise the duty of care and leadership while supporting a positive professional working relationship. I aim to maintain the good practice and to continue to grow and develop together with my team.



Enhancing dining experience	Social engagement and activities	Improving communication	Walking with Purpose
Improving induction processes for new staff	Dementia training course for relatives	Improving mouthcare	Improving dementia awareness for care home staff
Managing deterioration	Hydration project	Increasing supervisions	Improving end of life care

