

# AN EVALUATION OF A FRAILTY HOSPITAL AT HOME SERVICE: RAPIDLY ACCESSING SERVICE USER AND CARER PERSPECTIVES THROUGH EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

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## Introduction

**Virtual wards for people living with frailty enables provision of acute clinical care in a community setting when patients would otherwise require hospital care for monitoring and/or treatment.**

The East Kent Frailty Home Treatment Service (EKFHTS) provides a virtual ward through a multidisciplinary healthcare team which aims to investigate and treat people with frailty in their own home (or residential care setting) during a crisis, with the aim of providing a safe alternative to hospital admission or facilitating early discharge from hospital.

## Aims

**This was a rapid evaluation of the EKFHTS conducted between March and August 2022. A qualitative, multi-method approach was used.**

The evaluation was focused on the impact of the EKFHTS from the perspective of service users and carers, staff, and wider stakeholders. It aimed to improve understanding of implementation processes (including 'success factors') and outcomes for patients, and to report on areas for improvement.

## Objectives

- Investigate the extent to which the EKFHTS has impacted upon the patient and informal carer experience with respect to person-centred care, co-ordinated care, and wellbeing
- Explore the experiences and perceptions of a range of professionals and managers of the EKFHTS service and external stakeholders, exploring communication, roles and relationships, staffing structure, staff confidence and skills, supervision and governance arrangements, staff satisfaction and sustainability, and the nature of impacts and effectiveness

## What we achieved

**The evaluation was able to meet its objectives and collect data from different stakeholders within a short timeframe. This depended upon collaboration with the EKFHTS to nominate and/or approach the possible participants.**

Recruiting service users and carers to take part in telephone interviews with the research team was largely facilitated by staff members of EKFHTS who could identify appropriate patients and circumstances for inviting to take part in telephone interviews. Staff were also required for facilitating interviews by obtaining informed consent to be contacted by researchers so a telephone interview could be arranged.

SERVICE USER / CARER TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS (N=11)	
Service users	4
Informal carers (family members)	7
Formal carer (care home)	1
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>12*</b>

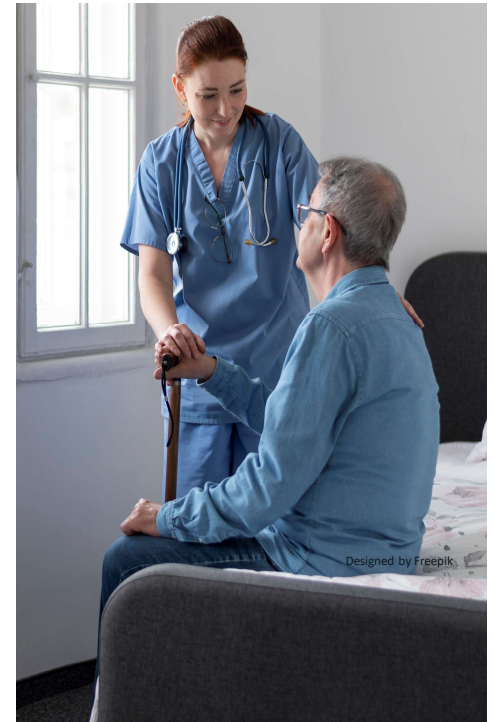
\*Includes 1 service user/informal carer dyad interview

## What we learnt through collaboration

**Meeting the evaluation's objectives within a short timeframe relied on regular contact with service staff and management and the ability to share information and documents quickly.**

This enabled the researchers to provide clear instructions and necessary forms to staff referring service users and carers.

It also allowed staff to share essential participant information with the research team in a prompt and ethical manner. This included important notes, such as patient preferences for contact times and whether they wanted to be accompanied by someone when interviewed.



## What has excited the collaboration

Staff and management at EKFHTS were very supportive of the evaluation and understood the importance of capturing the experiences and perspectives of service users and carers.

There was also a shared sense of urgency across the research team and service to achieve the evaluation's objectives as rapidly as possible.

**The enthusiasm and willingness to collaborate with the researchers on this rapid evaluation enabled it to be completed on time and meet its objectives.**