



Healthcare policies and programmes in practice The Patient Activation Measure (PAM)

Programme

The Patient Activation Measure assesses an individual's knowledge, skill, and confidence for managing their health and healthcare. It is a powerful and reliable measure of patient activation and can be used as an outcome measuring tool or a tailoring tool. Patient activation can be used to reduce health inequalities and deliver improved outcomes, better quality care and lower costs.

In Practice

Where?

Working in partnership with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council we developed a series of interventions using the Patient Activation Measure (PAM) as both a tailoring triage tool and outcomes measuring tool with residents living with long-term conditions.

What?

The project used the PAM to assess the level of activation of residents living with one or more long-term condition. Residents were then directed to a range of health service interventions appropriate to their activation level. Offering these participants a range of services gave them choice and took into account their stage on their self-management journey.

Why?

Tailoring service delivery according to patient activation levels can maximise productivity and efficiency by ensuring that the level of support provided is appropriate to the needs of the individual. Understanding which patients are likely to require additional help and designing appropriate interventions, enables services to deal with both current and future challenges.

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This triage approach, the only pilot in the UK of its type, used the PAM as both a tailoring tool and an outcomes measure by:

1. Promoting patient centred care - participants received an appropriate and targeted health service suitable to their needs. Following the intervention, we assessed the long-term effect of improved activation on the use of local health services
2. This tailored approach allowed the Commissioning body to better understand the current and future needs of residents living with a long-term condition and to give participants choice

How?

Participants were triaged into one of the following interventions:

- 3 x 2-hour self-management awareness workshop
- 6 x 2-hour community based self-management generic programme
- 6 x 2-hour community based condition specific self-management programme
- large community event for all participants

At the workshops and events, participants learned self-management tools, skills and techniques to help them manage their condition better, improving their health and wellbeing. At the events, **self management uk** engaged the support of other community health providers signposting attendees following the programmes to encourage them to maintain healthy behaviours and changes to their lifestyle.

James Williams, Commissioner at Southend-on-Sea Borough Council said *"The events were designed to ensure that residents not only received a more targeted and specific health intervention, but were also involved in a forum for sharing their views and ideas on how community health services can be delivered. We hoped to encourage as many people as possible to attend and learn more about how self-management can make a positive impact on their lives"*

The pilot project forms part of a wider initiative launched by Southend-on-Sea BC transforming the way health services are delivered and is one of the first of its kind nationally, already gaining high levels of interest from across the UK.

Progress

Patient activation is a powerful mechanism for tackling health inequalities. Used in population segmentation and risk stratification, it provides new insights into risk that go beyond those obtained using traditional socio-demographic factors.

We believe that this approach will deliver a more sustainable and healthier community amongst the population of patients with long-term health conditions.

This pilot is being evaluated by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and the Health Foundation and an update to this document summarising the results will be made after June 2016.

Further reading:

"Supporting people to manage their health, an introduction to patient activation", The Kings Fund, May 2014.

"Independent evaluation of the feasibility of using the Patient Activation Measure in the NHS in England, Early findings", University of Leicester, Department of Health Sciences, 20 November 2015.