



**St Christopher's**  
More than just a hospice

## Project ECHO

(Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes)

Project ECHO is a 'not for profit' initiative which aims to bring together specialist teams and primary health care providers, such as care homes, to enable learning and support. The goal is to improve best practice and empower participants to make informed decisions when problem solving in their place of work.

The heart of the Project ECHO model is its 'hub' (in this case St Christopher's) and 'spoke' (care homes, GP's, district nurses) knowledge sharing networks, using video conferencing to form communities of practice, supported by a trained facilitator and administrative/IT support from St Christopher's.

### History

Project ECHO was developed more than a decade ago at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center to help improve access to care, across a vast geographic area, for complex chronic health conditions. This was achieved by building capacity through the use of virtual education and training of local primary care providers who wanted to improve their skills in managing and treating these health conditions.

During late 2017 and early 2018 St Christopher's participated as a pilot site for Project ECHO supported by Hospice UK. Four nursing homes in Bromley took part in a series of sessions. The agenda, topic and case studies for each session were agreed beforehand by the participants and the session was facilitated by St Christopher's..

### **Our Aim is:**

To empower and support care home staff to provide individualized, skilled and effective end of life care for their residents.

### **What are the benefits of participation?**

- Allows staff to participate in training without leaving the care home, reducing lost working hours, travel time and travel costs
- Enables staff to build confidence whilst acquiring new skills and competencies
- Care homes can network and learn from one another - share 'best practice' and become a 'community of practice'
- Opportunity to present and discuss challenging case studies and receive feedback from a multidisciplinary team of specialists and peers
- Open access to ECHO training resources and recorded sessions
- Tailored to the learning requirements of your specific 'community of practice'
- Access to specialist knowledge

## How will ECHO be delivered at St Christopher's?

A group of care homes are invited to form a community of practice and participate in an ongoing programme of ECHO sessions. Each care home is known as a 'spoke'.

St Christopher's are referred to as the 'hub'. The hub consists of a lead/facilitator, an analyst and a coordinator.

Once a potential group of homes has been identified, the ECHO hub team will contact and visit each home to outline the project and answer any questions. Once all visits are completed, that group of homes will be invited to a Network Launch meeting hosted at the hub (St Christopher's) in Sydenham. At this meeting they, in conjunction with the ECHO lead, agree:

- a curriculum / topic for each session
- dates, times and duration for each session
- responsibility for which 'spoke' (participating care home) will present case studies at which session
- how the sessions will be evaluated

The ECHO Lead from St Christopher's has responsibility to source relevant speakers (specialists / clinicians) to present on the agreed topic. Please see appendix 1 for an example of the topics chosen by our existing ECHO communities.

Two weeks before each of the sessions, a confirmation email will be sent from the hub to each spoke with the relevant details for the session.

### A typical ECHO session may look like this:

- Introduction & reflection
- 20 min PowerPoint presentation from the hub on the agreed topic followed by discussion
- 1-2 case presentations from spokes followed by discussion
- Summary



All sessions are filmed and along with additional materials will form an online library that can be accessed by all spokes participating in that particular community of practice.

## What is the Hub and Spoke model?

### Hub

The hub is the regional centre at which the IT, administration support and the facilitator of the network are based. These crucial support roles enable the network to function smoothly and for participants to focus on the topics under discussion not the underlying technology or processes of Project ECHO.

#### Who are the ECHO Hub team at St Christopher's?

Gill Early, Project Lead                      [g.early@stchristophers.org.uk](mailto:g.early@stchristophers.org.uk)                      Tel 0208 768 4731

Dan Basso, IT Support Analyst              [d.bassoo@stchristophers.org.uk](mailto:d.bassoo@stchristophers.org.uk)                      Tel 0208 768 4731

Fran Conway, Coordinator                      [f.conway@stchristophers.org.uk](mailto:f.conway@stchristophers.org.uk)                      Tel 0208 768 4729

We also have a central ECHO email: [echo@stchristophers.org.uk](mailto:echo@stchristophers.org.uk)

### Spoke

A spoke is a participant in the network community. Sometime spokes will include several individuals, for example the "*Cedars care home*" with five or six staff joining a care home knowledge community, the "*Cedars spoke*".

Sometimes spokes may just be a single individual, "*John Smith*", joining the community – the "*John Smith spoke*".

The terminology is used, to help keep account of all who join and are participating in a community and to make it easier for the hub staff to ensure that all are signed up as community members.

### Software

In order to participate in the ECHO project, specific software is required in each home. Please see appendix 2 detailing the options available.

To learn more about the ECHO Project, please have a look at the following links:

<https://echo.unm.edu>

<https://www.hospiceuk.org/what-we-offer/clinical-and-care-support/project-echo>

Video Links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVAcx0QFzPU>