Frailty Matters is an innovative project in collaboration with the ALLIANCE, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, UWS, IFIC, QNIS and funded by Burdett Trust for Nursing

The project is capturing the voices of lived experience of older people with frailty, their carers and communities combined with the expertise of community nurses in NHS Ayrshire & Arran. Together we are co-producing and delivering a coaching and education programme with community nurses and co-coaches who have experience of living with frailty.

Progress to date includes:

- Ethical approval secured in September 2019.
- Three focus groups with community nursing teams across Ayrshire & Arran and interviews with district nursing team leaders.
- Recruitment of two co-coaches with lived experience of frailty through liaising with NHS Ayrshire and Arran’s Public Participation Network.
- Participation of 5-9 community nurses from three health and care partnerships in the combined coaching and educational programme
- 3 face to face and 2 virtual coaching and educational sessions
- On line blog and educational resources
- Monthly project team meetings and two steering group meetings
- Workshop session at ALLIANCE conference
- Workshop session with Scottish Older People Assembly
- Engagement session in supported accommodation in East Ayrshire
- Co-design of a Frailty Matters learning framework
- End of Year 1 report submitted to Burdett Trust
- Abstract accepted for International Conference on Integrated Care

The workshops and virtual sessions are continually adapted to the needs identified by participants.
Their initial goals were:

- Dialogue and group learning about frailty
- Opening my mind
- Putting frailty into context
- (Giving me) a different mind set
- Thinking about it (frailty) more
- Increase my frailty awareness

Community nurses are already reporting enhanced confidence and leadership skills in identifying and managing frailty and coaching their teams.

“Applying what I am learning is adding to my assessment skills, learning new ways for the patients in our care”

“Integrating the learning in frailty awareness helps and supports getting better care for people”

Co-coaches have shared that participation has helped them with self-management skills.

Co-coach 1 - “Co-produced coaching and educational sessions have been very educational and eye opening. It made me realise how caring and how hard the nurses, carers work. It has been a good group to work with. There has been a lot of information and good ideas coming out the group session”

Co-coach 2 - “I am full of admiration for all the girls in the sessions, for their energy, confidence and caring abilities. These girls have compassion in spades and that is reassuring for all and my own care if ever needed”

A member of the project team reflects on shadowing a participant to observe current practice

“The district nursing sister had a great approach to assessment however, from my observations, I would suggest this comes from experience and an innate quality to care and help people achieve the healthiest and safest life possible with the individual’s unique wishes as the focus. The district nurse did not pull out a framework or a tool but used her innate qualities along with previous learning and training in nursing to simply just care for someone who was vulnerable with frailty”.

Due to the exceptional circumstances of Covid-19 the research activity has paused for six months to allow the community nurses to fully focus on their clinical roles.
We hope the sessions to date provide food for thought and a peer support network for the difficult days ahead.

For more information and to find out how to get involved in the project please email frailtymatterstome@uws.ac.uk