The ESTHER network is made up from individuals, both private and professionals, who work to promote and improve the complex care. The network started in Sweden and is now spreading to the rest of the world. ESTHER is a symbolic person, with complex care needs, who requires the coordination between hospital, primary care, home care, community care and informal care givers. ESTHER is at the centre of all our daily work.

Implementing ESTHER in Somerset

The Symphony NHS Vanguard in South Somerset is innovating in health and social care delivery, rapidly evolving new models of care and aiming to produce seamless, coordinated, patient centred care across multiple provider organisations. In 2016 Symphony and NHS England sent me (along with Dr Robert Stewart from Kent and others) to Sweden to meet the Esther team. It was an inspiring visit with many ideas to take home and I’m grateful to the Esther Team in Jonkoping for their hospitality and ongoing support and advice. Since then Symphony have adopted Esther Coaches (we call them Champions), Esther Cafes and created our Quality Improvement and Innovations Group (QUIIG) to handle the many ideas that come from Esther. We already had a network of people trained in quality improvement, using the Institute of Health Improvement methodology, so it was important to us to join up our Esther Champions with this wider movement. We trained health care assistants and health coaches from general practice, community nurses, mental health nurses, and even a trainee general practitioner in the methodology as well as in coaching skills. Our Esther Champions have taken up projects such as improvements in diabetes care and linking communities with voluntary sector providers. Esther cafes have highlighted areas for improvement and some great practice too. Themes arising have included end of life care, what happens when people with complex needs go into hospital and what happens when carers are admitted to hospital. The stories have helped inform the development of our patient-held care plan which is also electronically shared between providers. We are also looking at creating Esther Cafes for smaller teams to hear stories from the patients who pass through their care - not necessarily to generate specific projects but to help our staff understand the effects, positive and negative, that small changes can make.

We have been stunned by the power of patient’s stories being told to multi-provider groups. The feedback is very different in character from anything produced by questionnaires. So many ideas come from these meetings that we have decided to set up a special group to prioritise and coordinate the resulting improvement projects. The QUIIG includes

www.facebook.com/groups/Esthercoach (Sweden)  www.facebook.com/groups/343643002670952 (UK coach)
www.facebook.com/groups/161169350969528 (Singapore coach)
senior representatives from Primary Care, Secondary Care, Social Care, Mental Health and the Voluntary Sector. There is a real buzz of collaboration and feel-good factor when we meet - We are making a difference.

Dr Ian Wyer
Symphony Programme Board Lead for Quality and Education

An improvement project implemented by Marie and Inger as part of their Esther coach training saw the rotas changed for this particular home care team. The care team were split into two and new rotas were planned so that each ESTHER would be care for by a smaller team and they would therefore meet fewer people. The smaller team and the pilot study was seen as an successful. It was not due to the dementia that was causing the ESTHERS not to remember the names of the care assistants it was how many were involved in their care. At the end of the project the amount was down to 17 each month.

Marie and Inger tells us that most of the ESTHERS were happy with the home care before the improvement but now they and their families have an increased feeling of security.

The role of a keyworker has all round benefits, for ESTHER for the family and for the member of staff as they now are able to get to spend more time with ESTHER and get to know them in a different way. ESTHER knows that she has someone other than family that she can confide in.

Marie and Inger feel that ESTHER coach training has enabled them to see the relationships between ESTHER and the care team move on to better relationship centred care.

Marie and Inger, care assistants who’s idea led to that ESTHERs in home care now meets 17 care assistants per month instead of, as before 32.

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ESTHER in Kent

In Kent we feel that we have taken off by now. The model is getting recognised as a quality improvement factor.
We have 2 ESTHER coach training cohorts running, finishing just before Christmas.
We keep running our ambassador training sessions, raising awareness of the model both regularly and on demand. As of today we have 232 ambassadors helping to spread the word as regards what the ESTHER model is and how it improves both real Esthers’ life, experience and the care itself.
We are very much looking forward to our ESTHER Inspiration day November 7th where we will share our progress with Esthers, professionals and other interested participants. There will be opportunities to attend mini workshops and talk to ESTHER coaches about their improvement work and how being an ESTHER coach has changed their work and their approach to Esthers in their care. A report from this day will follow in the next edition of the newsletter.
Another thing we are excited about is the upcoming visit from Ms Esther Lim from Singapore who will see us in December. This will be an amazing opportunity to exchange learnings and deepen our collaboration between our countries.

Micro System Festival

If you are interested in learning more about the ESTHER work and other good examples of improvements at a Micro System level, we would like to highlight this event in Sweden.

Feb 27-March 2018
Jönköping Sweden

The International Clinical Microsystem Festival is an arena and venue for those developing and improving health & social care.
At the Festival, we meet new-thinkers in health care. People who question old thoughts and are courageous to try new things.
We are practitioners, theorists, authors, researchers, but above all, we are convinced that the main source for change is within our own mind. In order to find new solutions, we need to look at the existing problems with new eyes. By meeting and sharing perspectives with others, this is made possible.

Read more and sign up:
http://plus.rjl.se/microsystemfestival#

Deadline for material for the next Newsletter is February 1st 2018

Please send to:
annac@grahamcare.co.uk

We would like to end the newsletter with an important message from John, one of our Esthers: “I want to feel like a person, not just a lump of meat, shuffled around in care”