



ICS Learning Network Data Sharing Case Study

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Lancashire and South Cumbria Health and Care Partnership – Digital Adoption and Transformation in Regulated Care Team

Introduction

Lancashire and South Cumbria Health and Care Partnership established a cross-sector Digital Adoption and Transformation in Regulated Care Team. The role of the team is to take the local CQC-regulated adult social care providers through their digital journey.

The overall objective is to ensure care providers are taking advantage of the major benefits of going digital including improving decisions about individuals' care through the timely sharing of information across health and care services.

A major focus is moving care providers from paper to digital social care records and rolling out sensor-based technology within care homes.

Background

Lancashire and South Cumbria have a large CQC-regulated market with:

- 443 residential homes
- 142 nursing homes
- 302 domiciliary care agencies

Governance arrangements

The Digital Adoption and Transformation Team is small, with only five staff, but it includes representatives from the NHS, local authority and the care provider sector. The work of the team is governed by a Steering Group which meets monthly and

consists of the Director of Adult Social Services, two senior health leads, four local authority leads and the Digitising Social Care team.

The Steering Group reports into the adult social care and Health Partnership Board every two months and they work with the Local Government Association, NW ADASS, the Care Provider Association and the individuals receiving care to ensure they deliver the project objectives.

Actions

The team takes care providers through four key stages:

- **Stage 1:** Ensuring providers have the skills and knowledge to become digital.
- **Stage 2:** Ensuring they have the infrastructure in place (e.g. access to wireless connectivity).
- **Stage 3:** Ensuring they can work online safely (e.g. ensuring they have the Data Security and Protection Toolkit, active NHSmail, and the policies in place).
- **Stage 4:** Ensuring shared care records are in place.

Making sure that staff have the right knowledge, the skills and the competencies to work in the digital world underpins all stages.

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the team supported at least 130 care homes to introduce digital social care records, as well as some domiciliary care agencies. This has been supported by almost £1.2 million in funding from the Digitising Social Care Programme, the Unified Tech Fund and the Digital Transformation Fund.

Approach

The team:

- **Communicates regularly and clearly with care providers.** The team takes providers on a journey from researching what system they would like to procure, to implementing it. They give them tools to do that (e.g. access to the [Assured Suppliers List](#), use of the [interactive decision-tree](#) to select the most appropriate functionality and supplier for their needs, and a cost-calculator to compare relative costs of products.)
- **Helps the care provider to make well-informed decisions about long-term implications.** The Digital Transformation Fund covers some funding for the licences, but there are long-term resource implications for the care

provider which they need to be aware of, as well as training and migration requirements.

- **Supports providers with procurement and set up** including getting quotes, setting up the financial agreements and contracts, support with training, migration and go-live support.
- **Works with the Assured Suppliers** - including new ones - to ensure care providers fully understand the range, quality and prices of the products available (e.g. support open days, webinars and demos, field requests from suppliers to contact providers, provide regular update to care providers about suppliers). The team will fund basic packages for care providers. Providers can top up the cost to purchase additional systems.
- **Supports providers through their journey** to ensure they are on track (e.g. meetings, email updates, , checklist of progress, tailored support etc). This includes opportunities for care providers to share experiences and lessons learned. The team is currently establishing a community of practice on WhatsApp.
- **Provides multiple opportunities to engage** in the programme, but if a provider is not ready to engage, they move them to a later stage of the programme. Providers need to be willing and able to take part.

Benefits

There are major benefits to going digital for people using care, unpaid carers (often family or friends), care providers, the NHS, local authorities and regulators. Lancashire and South Cumbria are focusing on these outcomes – and are already seeing benefits for early adopters of digital care records.

For people using care, digital social care records can enable more person-centred care as staff understand their needs and preferences better as a result of having timely access to better quality information. Being able to share information more quickly helps health and care staff to make better informed decisions about individuals' care. Unpaid carers also have a better shared understanding of their family member's or friend's needs and preferences.

Care providers can reduce risks and incidents by taking advantage of improved routine monitoring through embedded flags and alerts on the digital record platform. Digital records increase care services' capacity to actively use records as a source of accurate and reliable evidence to inform decisions about care and future development. Staff satisfaction and morale is often improved as digital records enable them to spend less time on administrative tasks, and more time caring. This

in turn can improve retention. The digital social care record platform can also be used as the base for other technologies.

NHS partners benefit from the move towards digital shared care records where both social care and NHS services can access and input to people's care records. This supports:

- faster assessment and admission procedures, as data is available immediately
- targeted interventions, as a result of being able to identify health needs and risks earlier
- reduced delays and errors in transfers out of hospital due to more rapid access to information and matching of needs to services
- faster responses from GPs for any identified health needs
- reduced admissions and readmissions due to timely access to better quality information.

Local authorities can also see benefits from being able to access digital data and analysis based on anonymised digital records including:

- easier management of capacity, demand and contracts
- faster assessment and admission procedures
- improved governance and oversight of the care market
- improved ability to measure care providers' accountability
- provision of aggregated information to the CCQ .

Providers in Lancashire and South Cumbria who have introduced digital social care records have been extremely positive about their experience:

“Our new online care system has helped us to spend more time with residents, thanks to instant recording of care notes, our staff now have time to have fun with our residents, which in turn helps retain a fantastic staff team at a time when it is very much needed.”

“Weight values flagging yellow prompted care staff to refer to our dietician. This joined up approach to care-giving across the team is now enabling timely interventions from appropriate team members to occur, where previously things may have been missed”.

“In my previous role I had used a digital system and had taken for granted the ease of accessing and sharing information. I knew it was essential if we

wanted to strive for outstanding care to be able to see assessments, care plans and care notes side by side. By removing the barrier of paperwork, this has immediately switched on the lights, and we have improved resident care plans and targeted intervention. We now have a much greater insight which enables a more pro-active approach to care”.

Lessons learned

- **Negotiate and work closely with tech suppliers.** They do not have straightforward costings and will adjust their pricing. Ensure they understand your local market.
- **Don't under-estimate the cost of introducing digital systems.**
- **Use the decision tree** (also known as [the DSCR assured supplier tool](#)) to support identification of requirements.
- **Be prepared for high levels of digital immaturity**, and initial enthusiasm followed by drop-out.
- **Be prepared to manage dissatisfaction.** Some early digital adopters, who are therefore not entitled to the Transformation Fund, will be unhappy with the restrictions. Some providers who are entitled to funding expect to simply receive the money. Be clear that there is a process, communicate it clearly, and stick to it.
- **Regular clear communication is crucial throughout all stages.**

Links and contacts

Website: [Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board – Digital Transformation](#)

Deb Gent and Natalie Heaven, Digital Adoption and Transformation in Regulated Care Team, Lancashire and South Cumbria Health and Care Partnerships

Deborah.gent@lancashire.gov.uk

Natalie.heaven@nhs.net