

Working with and sharing information with care providers

What this means

Many projects focused on creating digital solutions to better share information between care providers. They sought to provide more streamlined and holistic services for individuals as a result, with more relevant and automatic referrals, better sharing of patient data and improved monitoring of care outcomes across the board. Key challenges projects faced surrounded the safe sharing of information across data security boundaries and following complex Information Governance processes, including DARS (data access request service) requests.

What we've learnt

Sharing information to deliver more streamlined care

Creating the right tools to share information can improve care delivery for service users and improve the job satisfaction of staff, limiting administrative time. The correct systems can streamline the care system by automatically allocating staff, beds, transfers and resources. Projects proposed various solutions to share the right data quickly. For example, in **Nottinghamshire**, they sought to share live social care information with hospital staff out of hours, allowing for more efficient discharge of patients. Whereas the approach in **Sutton** involved creating a 'digital red bag' to ensure that hospital admission staff have all the correct information about a patient prior to admission, limiting the need for paper records, where data was often missing or inaccurate. Although the project was not completed, in **Stockton on Tees**, they planned to streamline patient information from health and social care into one joint care plan, meaning a more holistic patient service, where they do not need to repeat their story.

Automated referrals

Some projects have worked to share live information for referrals. For example, in **Hackney**, they aimed to combine NHS, Local Authority and Voluntary Sector data to identify who would most benefit from a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) platform and in **Norfolk** a client referral system was developed to track and follow-up social care client referrals to local organisations and their take-up.

Monitoring outcomes

Other projects aimed to monitor care outcomes through consolidating data, for example in **Kent**, where a tool was created to monitor the impact of voluntary care interventions, which hoped to delay escalation to statutory services.

Overcoming the challenge of sharing data

Many projects have faced delays in implementing these information sharing projects. Hurdles included Wi-Fi and digital capability in care homes (to share the information in the first place), information governance issues and issues with interoperability. In **Luton and Bedfordshire**, they partially overcame this by introducing a tiered system, digitising information-sharing bit-by-bit. Care homes would receive a bronze status for installing Wi-Fi and could move to gold with the full access of shared health records. This staged approach provided a clear path for progress and incentivised change.

For **Lincolnshire**, close collaborative working between the technology provider, the financial assessments team and the information management team at the council was needed to ensure the success of the project through the synthesising and accessing of collective data. This was made successful by working closely with the legal and information governance team through the design of the service.

The new demonstrator project in Lincolnshire also relies on sharing data digitally across health and social care. It relies on the training of care and NHS staff to ensure that care workers will be supported to complete the NHS DSP toolkit and access level 1 NHS training in data security, allowing them to get an NHSmail account.

Recommendations

- Start with the basics – some care homes need support with basic connectivity needs before any digital data-sharing systems can be introduced.
- Outline information governance needs from the start and ensure that information governance processes are built into the service design to avoid insurmountable challenges later down the line.
- Engagement with relevant stakeholders is required to create clear process outlines for sharing data and building trust. This takes significant time and should be considered from the outset.
- Deliver training for professionals on how best to share data securely.
- Ensure the technology works as desired by carrying regular in-situ testing.