

# Why adoption of digital care planning is so important for care providers today.

Written by Tony Thiru, Fulcrum Care Consulting

***Digital transformation in the health and social care sector is more important than ever today, and electronic care planning can play a vital role in the delivery of the best possible care. From more person-centred interactions, to care team efficiency, compliance, and risk mitigation, digital care planning is now a key tool for care providers.***

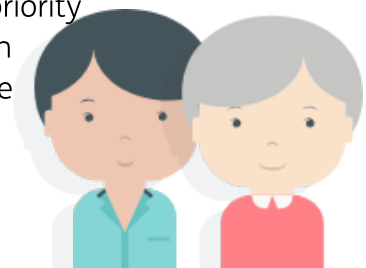
During my time in the adult social care sector, I have worked with many care homes to transform their quality of care significantly. When I work with care service, I focus on compliance, risk mitigation, and general troubleshooting to help care services get to where they need to be, and in recent years, technology has played a helpful role in assisting care services in meeting these requirements and regulations set out by the CQC.

In the past decade, the world, in general, has seen a digital revolution. Everyone has a smartphone, and almost everything is done online. However, the care sector has been slow on the uptake of digital transformation, and it's easy to see how switching from a purely paper-based way of working to doing everything digitally can seem daunting. But in my experience of assisting with care home digital transformations, the benefits of digital care management far outweigh the challenges and fears that commonly arise during the process.

In the past year, as care homes the world over were faced with their biggest challenge yet - a global pandemic, all of a sudden there was a surge in digital transformations, as care homes began to see the benefits of a digital way of working.

Having worked with over 60 councils and local authorities, I saw firsthand how these care services were utilising digital care planning to implement infection control measures and reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission within their homes. For example, care home managers were able to remotely monitor the day-to-day running of their homes with access to their electronic care planning device, maintaining operations and staying in touch with their care teams, whilst minimising visits to the home and maintaining compliance.

This is something that care providers who are not currently working digitally have struggled with, and it's no surprise that switching to electronic care planning is now the number one priority for many care services. This was also helped hugely by the Government's Infection Control Fund that was introduced to help care providers take measures to manage the spread of the virus.





## What are the benefits of digital care planning?

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of benefits of digital care planning, but working digitally has so many other benefits that can make providing daily care a whole lot easier, smarter, and most importantly, more person centred.

### Less time on admin and more time for person-centred care

For care teams, the purpose of working digitally is ultimately to save time, something which comes with a whole range of benefits for both the care worker and those they support. Firstly, notes are recorded on the go rather than at the end of the shift which requires less time on admin, and more face-to-face time with those they support.

Secondly, this means notes are far more accurate, clear, and concise compared to when they are written after a long shift, where numerous tasks have been done throughout the day.

In my experience, care workers (even those who are nervous about working digitally) feel empowered by their digital care planning device, as it makes communication easier and handovers much more seamless. In addition, those being supported and their families have greater peace of mind that care workers are following unique care plans and that there is a much larger focus on face-to-face time, rather than staff simply 'ticking boxes'. From a compliance perspective, it also makes it almost impossible to miss anything.

## Transparency of care, auditing, and reports

For care managers and owners, one of the biggest benefits of digital care planning has to be the transparency it provides, and this is ultimately what the health and social care sector should be working towards as a whole. Transparency of care isn't about trying to trip up care teams with their mistakes, but instead making it easier for care managers to monitor the care being provided and adapt care plans to ensure everyone is receiving the best care possible for their individual needs.

Working digitally makes evidencing care much simpler, which in turn makes auditing and reporting easier. Care services working with an electronic care planning system are far more likely to meet the requirements of CQC, particularly when it comes to compliance and regulation 17 of good governance. When a care service is due an inspection, rather than having to trawl through endless stacks of paperwork, inspectors can simply be granted access to the electronic care planning system, and find whatever information they need at the click of a button.

There is access to a clear audit trail of every interaction that has happened between a member of staff and the people they support. All information can be stored in one place and is easily accessible by every person that interacts with them. Having this information available at the click of a button not only creates an open culture, but it leaves less room for errors as everyone in the circle of care is kept informed.



From care teams to managers, families and other healthcare professionals outside of that care service, such as GPs, hospitals and other medical professionals, reports and care plans can be shared to provide seamless care and greater quality of service.

Digital care planning can minimise the risk of human error by assisting care teams in ensuring nothing gets missed. Features such as setting up alerts and warnings, and typing or dictating handover notes can be incredibly efficient, especially for large care services with multiple homes and staff who may work on a rotation. Digital care planning isn't about changing the way you work, but about enhancing the way you work with a digital platform that compliments the way you like to run your care service.

However, as we are handling personal information of people (some time very sensitive), data security is a very important aspects. All stakeholders should be reassured that data in digital care recording systems are safe and well protected from unauthorised access, distortions, deletions etc.

## What are the barriers to adoption?

During my time working with a range of different care services, there are some common fears and challenges I come across from both care teams and managers, and it mostly comes down to mindset.

The health and social care sectors have indeed some catching up to do when it comes to technology, and it's great to see more care services becoming interested in adopting this new way of working. However, for many, it comes down to funding and infrastructure issues such as lack of WiFi, and a fear of the upfront investment costs. It's easy to get hung up on the costs, but it's important to look at the qualitative benefits as well as the quantitative aspects of adopting electronic care planning.

Often care services know what they're doing works, and so they think "why change?", but when they see how electronic care planning compliments their current way of working, they always wonder why they didn't make the switch sooner. As I said, working digitally is a way of enhancing the care you already provide, it's not there to replace your current working practices.

Recording care on a digital device is no different from how we use our smartphones on a daily basis, and even for those less accustomed to smartphones, I've always found people are quick to adapt to the devices. With the right platform and a willingness to learn, digital care management has nothing but positive results. Care services can see an improvement in record keeping and attitude towards note-taking.

Whereas care teams would have to take significant time out of their day to handwrite their notes on paper, a digital device has prompts that allow care teams to go about their day with ease, without the risk of forgetting or missing any important detail throughout their shift. Care is linked-up better, with all members of the care team, including managers and owners (who are not usually around on a day-to-day basis) engaging with the care plans.



This holistic view of care is already paving the way for interoperability to become the norm in the health and social care sectors, with integrations of other healthcare systems such as medication management and prescription management already featured on some digital care planning devices. As more care services move towards digital transformation, this interoperability will allow health and social care providers to have a greater view of an individual's needs and wellbeing, thus improving the quality of care for everyone.

At Fulcrum, we have worked with many care providers who have adopted Nourish Care as their digital care plan provider. Nourish works with a range of different care services, including residential, nursing, dementia care, learning disabilities, large care groups, and more. Nourish offers a flexible digital platform that can be tailored to each care service's needs.

With Nourish you can create personalised digital care plans, custom interactions, and personalised timelines for everyone within your care service. Just as I have explained, Nourish's digital platform allows care teams to record at the point of care, and analyse data over time to tailor care plans to the individual's needs. Nourish aims to empower care teams to provide the safest and best quality care possible to individuals while providing technology that is simple and easy to use. The most important goal for Nourish is to enable carers to spend less time on admin, and more time providing face-to-face, person-centred care.

***If you would like to find out more about how Nourish can help you improve your care service, then visit [www.nourishcare.co.uk](http://www.nourishcare.co.uk) or book your free personalised demo today.***



## About Tony Thiru

***Tony is a Care Consultant for Fulcrum Care Consulting. Tony specialises in compliance, risk mitigation, and “troubleshooting” care and nursing homes, often turning around multiple homes concurrently. To find out more or to contact Tony, [click here.](#)***

## LETS HAVE A CHAT

Need help with any of the issues listed above?  
Get in touch to see how our electronic care planning system works

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