

Case study: Digitising Social Care at Burlington Hall

Burlington Hall is a care home situated in Woburn Sands, six miles south-east of Milton Keynes. Home to 53 residents, Burlington Hall predominantly provides specialist dementia care for residents, alongside a wide range of general types of care including Alzheimer's, challenging behaviour, and palliative.

Anda Marin, the general manager of Burlington Hall, joined the care home in 2019 and has seen the care home transformed as a result of the Digitising Adult Social Care (DiSC) programme.

Since 2020, Burlington Hall has benefited from many of the products and services as part of the DiSC programme provided by Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Health and Care Partnership. The DiSC programme aims to transform the face of social care for local people by identifying and implementing a range of new and innovative technologies to help improve patient care.

By working in collaboration and true partnership, the DiSC programme is helping save care homes, like Burlington Hall, valuable time, effort, and resources through digitalisation – enabling teams to spend more time caring for the people at the heart of their services.

One key innovation of the DiSC programme praised highly by Anda is the Data, Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT). Since utilising the toolkit, Burlington Hall has been able to demonstrate that it can securely store and protect patient data and strengthen its IT system, acting as the foundation for the care home to begin its digitalisation journey. It has also enabled staff to access NHSmail.

NHSmail is a secure email system which allows Burlington Hall to receive patient information electronically from other healthcare partners, such as GPs and hospitals. Prior to obtaining NHSmail, Anda told us that her staff would've been required to visit practices to access resident information taking valuable time away from the care provision. Access to NHSmail has allowed Burlington Hall to demonstrate safe practice to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and has enabled the care home to use Proxy Access.

The DiSC team has supported Burlington Hall to utilise Proxy Access, a system which allows staff to carry out safer, easier, and quicker ordering of repeat medicines on behalf of care home residents. Using a direct link to residents' GP records, staff with the correct approval can securely log into SystmOne and order medication, where previously they'd have had to phone the GP surgery.



Anda has praised the easy-to-use system for increasing communication with GPs regarding repeat prescriptions, allowing staff to see if there has been a medication review ensuring repeat ordering is safer, more efficient and cost effective. Through digitalising this service, staff can also access records and order medications at any time of the day.

Another key innovation that Burlington Hall has benefited from is acoustic monitoring. Acoustic monitoring provides an assistive monitoring system where a sound detecting device non-obtrusively listens to sleeping residents and triggers an alert for staff to respond as required, when sound exceeds or falls below an individual's set noise level. Alerts can be raised for patients calling out, coughing or getting out of bed. Anda credits the system with "improving the quality of life for residents, reducing the amount of writing staff have to do and making life easier". Since using acoustic monitoring, Burlington Hall has seen no cases of night-time falls highlighting the system's success.

The Raizer II chair is another innovation Anda brands a 'godsend' for improving the level of care patients receive. The Raizer is an emergency lifting chair which can help raise an uninjured person from the floor after a fall, acting as a replacement for the traditional 'hoist'.

High levels of discomfort and feelings of anxiety have been noted in residents using the hoist, particularly in those with dementia. However, Burlington Hall staff have noticed the Raizer chair helps alleviate these apprehensions with residents feeling safer and more secure.

At Burlington Hall, the Raizer chair was recently used to help a female resident who fell within a small, enclosed space in the bathroom. The size of this space would've made it impossible to use the traditional hoist device effectively, but the Raizer chair was deployed with ease to lift the resident off the floor.

The chair limited the amount of time the resident spent on the floor because of her fall, helping to improve resident safety and care and reducing the likelihood of her requiring a hospital stay or ambulance call out.

The final innovation used by Burlington Hall is the Whzan Blue Boxes, which contain everything needed to enable staff to make regular health checks on their residents. Measurements such as heart rate, blood pressure, blood oxygen levels and temperature can be taken with the kit, with results being directly linked to GP records. The device provides staff with question prompts for assessments and advises whether residents need to attend hospital, helping to avoid unnecessary ambulance transfers and hospital admissions. Staff at Burlington Hall report feeling empowered and reassured through the device and its easy-to-use interface.

Anda has praised the DiSC programme, stating that staff can now access the information they need to care for residents quickly, and that smart technology has improved the quality and safety of the care they provide. Demand for accident and emergency services and hospital stays has reduced, and for those who do need a hospital stay, innovations have made it easier to get them back home as soon as they're well enough. In addition, care home staff are learning new skills and becoming more digitally confident.

Anda added: "All of the digital support services have different purposes and benefits, but they work together to make a huge difference to our staff and the patients in our care."