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June/July 2026



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Hello and welcome to the June/July issue of Tomorrow's Care.

Carers Week 2026, which took place this June, offered an important opportunity to recognise the vital contribution of both paid and unpaid carers across the UK. This year's theme, Building Friendly Communities, highlights how stronger local connections and more supportive networks are essential to reducing isolation and improving outcomes for carers and those they support.

Alongside this, the sector continues to grapple with persistent challenges, from workforce pressures and rising demand to the ongoing strain on funding and service sustainability. These issues reinforce the need for joined-up thinking and long-term reform across health and social care.

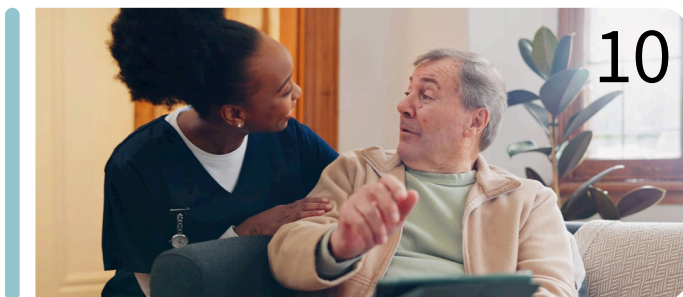
In this issue, Paul Burstow, Chair of the Board at the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), asks what a truly effective social care system would require, examining the difficult choices around entitlement, funding and responsibility. We also explore how design, technology and smarter systems are helping to reshape care environments and improve outcomes for residents and staff alike.

As we recognise carers, it is also essential to confront the structural challenges facing the sector – and the need for meaningful, sustained change. This issue brings together insight and practical guidance to support that journey.

I hope you enjoy reading.

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REAL-TIME WORKFORCE INSIGHT FROM CARE WORKERS OFFERS CLEARER VIEW OF PRESSURES IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE

More than 211,000 responses from care workers have already been gathered through a new workforce insight platform, with early data showing recruitment and retention as the lowest-scoring workforce category.

The findings come from Click Pulse, developed by Flourish, part of Merseyside-based The Progress Group, which enables care workers to share feedback on workload, pay, wellbeing and other workplace pressures through everyday training activity.

The platform, which launched in May, gives employers and commissioners a more immediate picture of workforce challenges in adult social care, in a sector where workforce data is typically based on annual surveys. Click Pulse is believed to be the first platform of its kind in adult social care to embed continuous workforce feedback directly into training activity.

Flourish works across adult and children's social care and education, providing workforce development and training solutions designed to raise standards and improve quality of care.

Click Pulse was developed with The Care Workers' Charity and piloted with care providers ahead of launch.

The platform is built into Flourish's existing e-learning system, which is used by more than 110,000 care professionals and generates more than 150,000 course completions each month.

It uses a consistent set of standardised questions designed to reflect real frontline challenges, covering key areas including pay, workload, wellbeing, leadership, training and retention.

Early data shows an overall broadly positive workforce sentiment score of 78%. However, the detail behind the results points to clear pressure points, with recruitment and retention emerging as the lowest-scoring category at 67%. The lowest individual score related to whether pay meets day-to-day living costs, highlighting the continued impact of cost-of-living pressures on the care workforce.

Eammon Price, Chief Executive of Flourish, said: "Adult social care has been relying on workforce insight that is often out of date by the time it's used. If we're serious about addressing the pressures facing the sector, we need a much clearer and more timely understanding of what's happening on the frontline."

"Click Pulse introduces a more immediate way of understanding what staff are experiencing. Because the feedback is gathered

regularly, you can start to see where pressures are building and respond earlier. It's built into something people are already doing, so insight can be gathered consistently and at scale without introducing additional surveys, systems or reporting requirements.

"That reflects many of the challenges providers already know exist, but having timely workforce insight means organisations can identify issues earlier and make more informed decisions about how they support and retain their people."

Care workers are asked a single, structured question when they complete a training module, with the option to provide more detailed feedback through a fuller survey. By capturing feedback on a regular basis, it enables employers to identify emerging pressures earlier and respond more effectively.

Karolina Gerlich, Chief Executive of The Care Workers' Charity, said: "Care workers' voices matter, but they're not always heard in a way that reflects what day-to-day life on the frontline is really like.

"That's why we've worked with Flourish on the development of Click Pulse – to help shape an approach that makes it easier for workers to share their experiences in a simple and consistent way, without adding to workload.

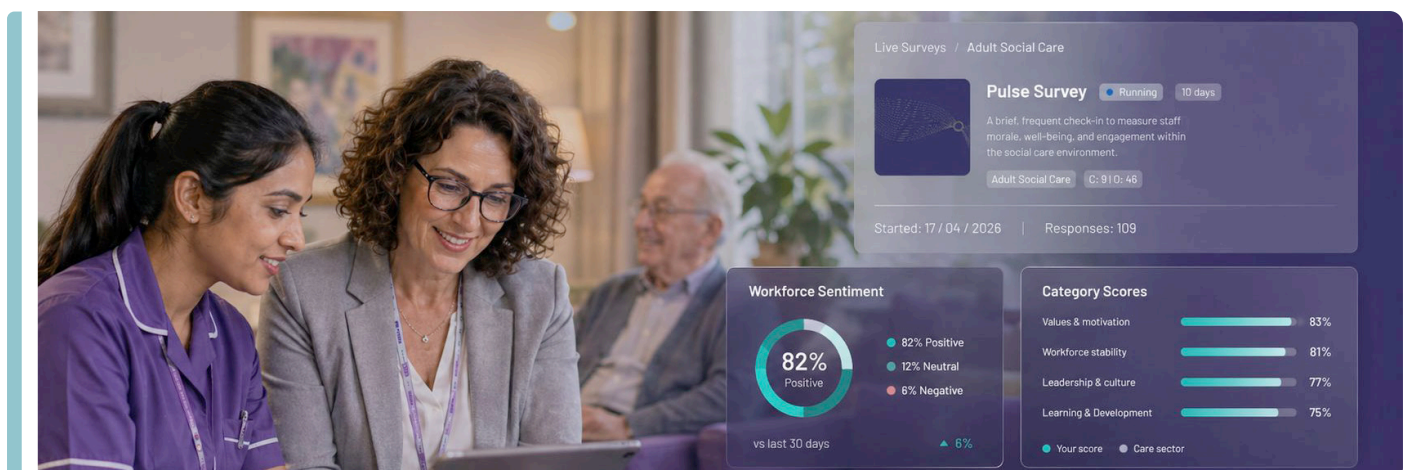
"Having a clearer, more regular picture of what staff are going through is essential if organisations are going to respond in a meaningful way."

Insight is provided to employers, giving them access to structured data which can support workforce planning and operational decisions.

Walfinch Oxfordshire Home Care was among the providers piloting Click Pulse ahead of its launch. Kam Gill, Managing Director, said: "Being able to hear honestly from our team on things like pay, training and how they feel in the role and then benchmark that against the wider care sector, is exactly the kind of insight we want to act on."

Further development of Click Pulse is planned, including expansion into other sectors. As adoption grows, aggregated and anonymised data could contribute to a more consistent and timely understanding of workforce pressures across the sector.

<https://flourish.co.uk>



RESIDENTS ENJOY A PAW-FECT AFTERNOON

Care UK's Ambleside care home in Stratford-upon-Avon recently welcomed furry friend Jasper the labradoodle for an afternoon of animal therapy.

On the day, Jasper and his owner Beryl, a former resident's daughter, made sure to pop into residents' individual rooms so everyone could have one-on-one time with him.

Ambleside resident Christine Barket said: "It is always lovely to see Jasper; he is such a beautiful dog. If I am feeling a bit down, he always cheers me up."

The weekly visits started six years ago, when Jasper was only three months old, inspired by conversations with residents who had pets in their younger years and missed having a dog.

Resident Daphne Beadle, who used to own a guide dog, said: "I look forward to seeing Jasper as it brings back memories of my own dog, it makes me feel happy and he is such a friendly dog."

Stephanie Obeng, Deputy Manager at Ambleside, said: "We always have such a

fun time when Jasper visits the home – his visits are a real highlight.

"We'd like to say a big thank you to Beryl for introducing Jasper to the home; we can't wait for the next visit."

www.careuk.com



HISTORIC HENDON HALL BRINGS 1966 WORLD CUP SPIRIT TO CARE HOME OPEN WEEK

Residents at Signature at Hendon Hall, the former hotel where England's 1966 World Cup squad stayed, welcomed guests for a special screening event celebrating England's historic victory as part of this year's Care Home Open Week celebrations.

The event, which took place in the home's '66 Bar, brought together residents, relatives and football fans to relive the iconic 1966 World Cup final through personal memories, memorabilia and match highlights. It forms part of Care Home Open Week, the national initiative led by Championing Social Care, encouraging care homes across the UK to open their doors to local communities.

Among those who shared their memories of the day was resident Edward Cohen, who attended the 1966 World Cup final at Wembley after receiving a ticket through family connections. Edward was just 12 rows from the front as England secured their historic victory over West Germany.

Recalling the atmosphere, Edward said, "As we went into extra time, the atmosphere in the stadium was feverish. We all went wild as the crowd rushed onto the pitch, even though there were still two minutes to play. When the final whistle blew, everyone surged onto the pitch again – England had won the World Cup."

Stephanie Bowie, Director of Sales & Marketing at Signature Senior Lifestyle, said: "Bringing this event to life at Hendon Hall felt incredibly special given the

home's unique connection to the 1966 World Cup. Seeing residents, families and the local community come together to share memories, stories and laughter perfectly reflects the warmth and sense of community we are so passionate about at Signature Senior Lifestyle."

The afternoon featured a highlights screening of the match, a World Cup-themed quiz and resident storytelling, alongside a filmed contribution from former England ball boy Neil Rioch. The full match was also screened in the home's cinema room.

The event helped showcase the important role care homes play in bringing communities together and creating meaningful experiences for care home

residents – a key focus of Championing Social Care's Care Home Open Week campaign.

This year's Care Home Open Week theme celebrates the spirit of the World Cup – recognising the global football tournament – encouraging homes to host sporting, social and community events that highlight the warmth, connection and vibrancy of modern social care.

Signature at Hendon Hall, which operated as a hotel until 2018, retains strong links to the 1966 tournament. Its 66 Bar houses World Cup memorabilia and references throughout the home, including Jules Rimet Avenue and Pickles Way.

www.signature-care-homes.co.uk



EXCELCARE LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES NAVIGATING THE CARE JOURNEY

Excelcare has launched a newly redesigned website aimed at better supporting families as they explore and navigate care options.

Developed in partnership with internal teams and informed by research into the needs of individuals and families navigating care, the new platform has been created as a comprehensive information hub – not only showcasing Excelcare's homes and services but providing broader guidance to help people better understand the care journey.

Recognising that decisions around care can often feel complex and overwhelming, the website has been designed to offer clear, accessible and practical information at every stage. The platform brings together a wide range of resources, including informative articles, news and updates from across the group, as well as access to webinars and newsletters designed to educate and support.

The launch reflects Excelcare's continued commitment to supporting families beyond the delivery of care – providing reassurance, clarity and guidance from the very first point of consideration.

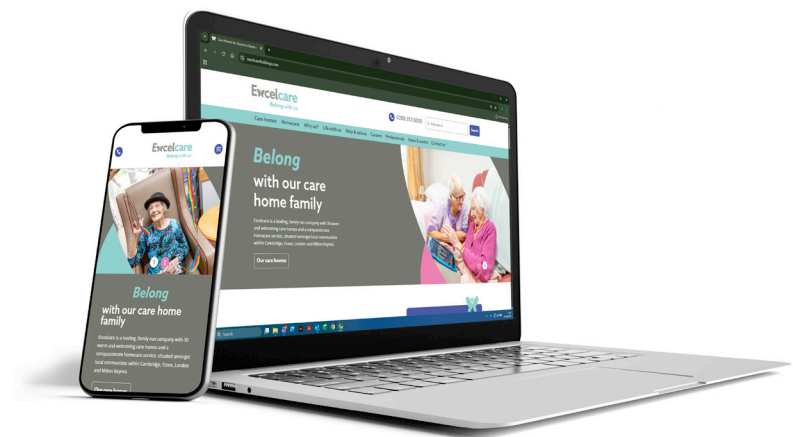
Sam Manning, Chief Operating Officer, said: "We recognise that choosing care can be a significant and sometimes challenging decision. Our new website has been designed to provide families with the clarity and support they need, bringing together information in a way that is accessible, practical and reassuring."

Osman Ertosun, CEO and Chairman, added: "This launch represents an important step for Excelcare. Supporting families is at the heart of what we do, and this platform

allows us to do that in a more meaningful way. Not just by sharing information about our homes, but by helping people navigate the wider care journey with confidence."

As Excelcare continues to work alongside families across its communities, the new website strengthens its role as a trusted partner, offering not only care services but also the knowledge and resources people need to make informed decisions.

www.excelcareholdings.com



BRISTOL CARE HOMES APPOINTS HILLS WASTE SOLUTIONS

Care home provider Bristol Care Homes has appointed Hills Waste Solutions as its recycling and waste management partner, on an initial two-year contract. Bristol Care Homes' sites at Almondsbury, Thornbury, Horfield and Fishponds will be serviced from Hills' Avonmouth depot.

Sustainability Manager at Bristol Care Homes Enock Ebbah said: "Our partnership with Hills Waste Solutions is a pivotal step toward achieving our long-term Net Zero goals. By leveraging real-time waste data and a waste-hierarchy-led approach, we are significantly enhancing our recycling efficiency."

"Bristol Care Homes' decision to partner with Hills demonstrates their strong commitment to progressing towards net zero," said Caroline Wilde, Divisional Director - Commercial & Industrial at Hills Waste Solutions. "We are proud to welcome them alongside the growing number of care home operators who trust us to support their sustainability goals. Our team will work closely with theirs to ensure full compliance, drive continuous improvements in recycling performance, optimise waste management efficiencies

and help reduce carbon impacts across their operations."

Hills Waste Solutions' Sales Manager Tula Welsh commented: "The management team at Bristol Care Homes can utilise Hills' customer portal, which gives them real-time data about their bin weights, sustainability metrics, and real-time collection updates, helping them to track progress and make informed decisions."

Summarising, Rich Crocker, CEO at Bristol Care Homes, said: "Working with Hills Waste Solutions fully aligns with our short- and long-term aims of our waste management processes, reducing waste wherever possible, increasing our recycling opportunities and considering the impact we have on the environment through carbon footprint reductions."

www.hills-waste.co.uk



QCS LAUNCHES LYRA MULTI – THE ONE TRUSTED SOURCE FOR KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLIANCE AT THE POINT OF CARE

QCS (Quality Compliance Systems), an RLDatix company, has announced the launch of Lyra Multi, the next stage of AI technology powering the QCS Compliance Centre, delivering dynamic, real-time guidance directly into the hands of care teams who need it.

A UK digital provider of compliance management, QCS supports more than 245,000 registered users across home care, residential and specialist services. The QCS Compliance Centre provides constantly updated policies, procedures and compliance toolkits, tailored to each organisation and maintained by QCS's in-house team of regulatory and best-practice experts.

Across the care sector, frontline teams are often required to navigate complex and evolving policies in high-pressure environments, where speed and clarity are critical. Lyra Multi has been designed to support that reality. Building on QCS's trusted, up-to-date policy content, Lyra Multi transforms guidance into an active, dynamic decision-support platform giving carers instant access to the right information, exactly when they need it.

Lyra Multi connects all relevant policies, interprets them in context and converts complexity into clear, relevant and practical guidance exactly when teams need it, turning policy storage into real decision support.

At any given time, users can ask a question and get instant, tailored answers along with clear summaries and key insights. Lyra Multi brings together every policy held securely within the QCS platform, turning complexity into practical guidance carers can act on immediately. Lyra Multi supports Home Care and other frontline teams working in busy, complex and emotionally demanding situations. It provides real-world support that fits the realities of care, not just compliance on paper.

Powered by the QCS Compliance Centre – a single, current, trusted source of compliance – Lyra Multi helps teams make consistent, defensible decisions without slowing care.

For carers, managers and leaders, the system delivers confidence at every level. Carers gain clear answers in the moment, reducing second guessing and enabling faster, more assured decision making, with the reassurance that they are doing the right thing at the right time. Managers benefit from reduced variation in practice, lower risk exposure and far less time spent manually updating or interpreting documents. For leaders, Lyra Multi provides greater inspection confidence, robust and standardised guidance across services, and stronger oversight, creating the foundation for more effective training, benchmarking, risk spotting and future predictive support.

Nikki Walker, CEO of QCS, said: "The launch of Lyra Multi, the next evolution of our AI powered platform, marks an important step forward. Care teams consistently tell us they need fast, reliable answers in the moment and that policies on their own aren't enough. Lyra Multi turns static documents into dynamic, practical guidance, giving staff the confidence to act at the point of care.

"The reality is that care has evolved rapidly, while compliance has struggled to keep up. Lyra Multi addresses that gap by creating a single, trusted source of truth combining the sector's most up-to-date content with contextual, real-time support. The result is a smarter, more responsive approach that helps teams deliver safe, consistent, high-quality care every day."

www.qcs.co.uk



SURECARE SUPPORTS HEALTH AND WELLBEING WITH THE WHZAN BLUE BOX

At SureCare Central Cheshire, the organisation is always looking for new ways to care for its clients and keep everyone safe, healthy and comfortable at home.

The team has introduced the Whzan Blue Box, a simple, portable digital health toolkit that helps its carers monitor people's wellbeing more closely.

The Blue Box allows SureCare's carers to take key health readings such as heart rate, blood pressure, temperature and oxygen levels. These readings are used to generate a National Early Warning Score (NEWS2) – the same system used by the NHS to identify early signs of changing health.

This enables the team to identify small changes sooner, arrange support more quickly and keep families informed. It forms part of SureCare's approach to combining thoughtful care with technology to provide additional reassurance for clients and their loved ones.

The Blue Box is being used in a variety of ways across the service. For some clients, it is supporting work with other healthcare professionals to help reduce hospital admissions, while for others it is assisting with earlier discharge from hospital by enabling health monitoring at home.

Each Blue Box contains a tablet and Bluetooth-enabled health tools that connect securely to a cloud-based system. This allows the care team – and where appropriate GPs or family members – to access up-to-date information and make informed care decisions at the right time.

SureCare's Registered Manager, Sarah Castelow, said: Our adoption of Whzan Digital Health demonstrates our commitment

to integrating technology with compassionate, person-centred care. It allows us to provide proactive support, enhance wellbeing, and giving families peace of mind.

"The Blue Box is a great support to all of our clients, particularly those that have live-in care packages and have a dedicated box for their sole use."

Alongside its use in clients' homes, the Blue Box is also being used in the community. Senior carer Lauren Doherty has attended coffee mornings and luncheon clubs in rural communities around Nantwich, using the device to promote awareness of health monitoring and encourage people to seek GP advice where needed.

Lauren commented: "It's been brilliant to meet those in the local community and use the Whzan Blue Box to encourage those who are putting off booking a check-up with the GP to get them booked in."

One attendee said: "It's been great to come in today and have my blood pressure checked. I'm meant to do it at home, but I struggle to put the cuff on, and getting out to the GP to get it checked isn't easy."

SureCare is proud to be using innovations such as the Whzan Blue Box to support independence, dignity and wellbeing across the community. If you'd like to learn more about how the company is using digital health monitoring in its care services, or would like the team to come along to an event, please get in touch through the website.

www.surecare.co.uk/central-cheshire



PERSON CENTRED SOFTWARE ACQUIRES CAMASCOPE TO HELP REDUCE MILLIONS OF MEDICATION ERRORS IN UK SOCIAL CARE

Person Centred Software (PCS) has acquired Camascope in a deal that brings together best-in-class medication management and digital care solutions; connecting medication data to the full picture of a person's care. This helps providers deliver safer, smarter and more connected medication management across UK social care.

Medication management is one of the most critical and riskiest workflows in social care. The CQC has cited research estimating that 237m medication errors occur in England every year across health and adult social care. Missed doses and incorrect administration put people at risk and add pressure to already-stretched care providers.

MEDICATION INTELLIGENCE FOR SAFER, MORE CONNECTED CARE

By joining a person's medication administration record to the rest of their care notes such as hydration, falls and activities, care medication can be understood in the full context of a person's care. That's the difference Camascope and PCS will make together: medication understood in the full context of a person's care so teams can spend less time piecing systems together and more time caring for people.

As social care continues to digitise, Person Centred Software is ushering in a new stage of care intelligence: using data from the care record to give providers insight, benchmarking and evidence they can act on. Now, by connecting Camascope's medication data to the wider care record, PCS extends this into medication intelligence, moving beyond a record of administration towards smarter insights that guide safer, more connected care.

The teams at Camascope and PCS are united by a shared commitment to care providers across the UK: safer and smarter care. Together, they will continue to invest in reliable technology, better service and practical innovation that makes a meaningful difference to care teams, providers and the people they support.

A NEW CEO WITH A TRACK RECORD IN DATA, AI & CARE

Kehan Zhou has been appointed Group CEO of PCS, Camascope and Clearcare.

Born in a village in Inner Mongolia with no paved roads, Kehan taught himself English from TV and podcasts, applied to 40 US universities and won two full scholarships. His career since has taken him from building a computer vision technology company in the US to Group CEO of the PCS Group, which includes ClearCare, specialists in children's care software.

Having built and scaled AI and data businesses, Kehan joined Camascope as CEO in 2023. Under his leadership the company grew from supporting around 14,000 care residents to more than 85,000 and was ranked 248th in the Financial Times' FT 1000 list of Europe's fastest-growing companies in 2026.

Kehan believes those building technology must stay close to the people who use it. To understand the realities facing care providers, he has spent time living as a care home resident and has worked night shifts alongside the teams who rely on the software day in, day out. Kehan's user-first philosophy, grounded in his expertise in AI, data, and social care, is what will shape PCS's next chapter: becoming a connected care



intelligence platform that brings stronger data, analytics and AI across social care.

Kehan said: "It is a privilege to work alongside so many compassionate, mission-driven colleagues across PCS, Camascope and Clearcare. Together we have an opportunity to build exceptional technology that makes a meaningful difference to care providers, the people they support and their families. I remain deeply committed to staying close to the people we serve, whose dedication, resilience and humanity inspire our work every day."

THE MARKET OPPORTUNITY

The UK has 465,000 registered care home beds and demand is rising faster than the workforce can grow to meet it. With demand outpacing the workforce, the opportunity lies in making better use of what the sector already has: its data. Yet that data has historically sat in silos, with medication managed separately from the wider care record, so it can't give carers time back or help them act sooner. PCS is building the connected infrastructure that changes that: a care operating system bringing together care delivery, medication management, staffing and training, and resident and family experience in one platform.

WHAT COMES NEXT

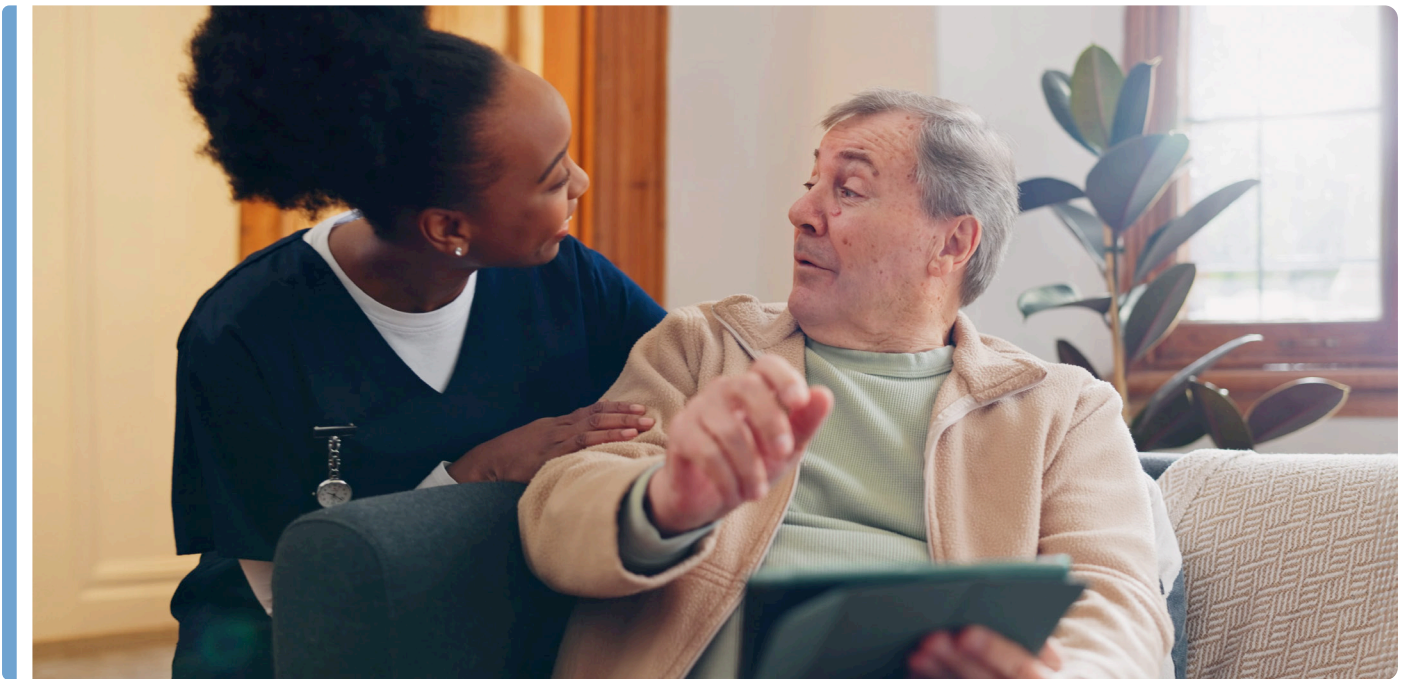
UK social care is facing a generational challenge. Demand for care is rising faster than the workforce available to deliver it, while the value of what care teams deliver is too often under-recognised or misunderstood: by families weighing care options, by local authorities setting fees, and by the wider health system that depends on social care to function effectively.

PCS believes the answer isn't simply more software that doesn't talk to each other. The sector needs technology that works as one. This means connected data, meaningful external benchmarks and clear evidence of the quality and value of care, so the focus stays where it belongs: on the person receiving care.

<https://personcentredsoftware.com>

WHAT WOULD A **WORKING** SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM REQUIRE?

Reform to the Care Act depends on making clear choices about entitlement, funding and responsibility, says Paul Burstow, Chair of the Board at Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).



Reform is not a statement of principle. It is a set of choices about how arrangements would work in practice.

There is no shortage of agreement about what social care should achieve. The Care Act sets out a clear ambition, grounded in wellbeing and individual rights. Work across the sector has helped to articulate that ambition in more accessible terms, describing what people should be able to expect from care and support. The Act itself embeds a right to choice and focuses on what people want to achieve in their lives, not simply the services they receive.

The challenge is not defining that ambition. It is translating it into arrangements that are coherent, deliverable and sustainable. That requires working through a small number of questions.

■ WHAT IS GUARANTEED?

What does the system promise people – and on what basis?

The Care Act provides a framework for answering this question. It describes a system centred on wellbeing, independence and participation. In that sense, it can be read as an articulation of what people should reasonably expect.

But those expectations are not always clear in practice. Access to support depends on eligibility thresholds, local interpretation, and available resources. For many people, the point at which support becomes available remains uncertain. This uncertainty shapes how people experience the system, often requiring them to navigate complex processes at moments of stress or crisis.

Reform requires greater clarity about what is guaranteed, and for whom. That, in turn, brings into focus the boundary between the responsibilities of the state, the individual and the family.

These questions can be approached in different ways. At one end of the spectrum are more collective models of provision, in which risk is pooled across society and entitlements are more clearly defined. At the other are arrangements that place greater emphasis on individual responsibility, with the state providing a more limited safety net.

There is no settled consensus between these positions. But reform cannot avoid the need to work through their implications, including how they shape expectations, incentives and the distribution of risk.

■ HOW IS IT FUNDED AND SUSTAINED?

How are costs and risks shared over time?

Adult social care already operates as a mixed economy. A significant proportion of care is funded privately, with individuals and families bearing a substantial share of financial risk. This reflects a system in which public funding, private contributions and unpaid care all play a role in meeting need.

Reform cannot assume a blank starting point. It must work with – and, where necessary, rebalance – these existing arrangements. That raises practical questions: how public funding interacts with private contributions; how self-funders are treated within the

system; and, how funding arrangements support, or undermine, long-term sustainability.

The mixed economy also provides flexibility, responsiveness and capacity that would be difficult to replicate through wholly public provision. At the same time, it can create variation in access, experience and outcomes, and can expose individuals and families to significant financial risk.

These are not simply questions of affordability. They shape incentives, access and public expectations, and influence how the system is experienced in practice.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

How responsibilities are defined and exercised is a central design question. In practice, responsibility is shared:

- Between national and local government
- Between health and care systems
- Between the state and the individual and their family

As longevity has increased, and eligibility for publicly funded care has tightened, the line between what is provided through the NHS and what is subject to means-testing has shifted. These changes have taken place gradually and are not always visible to those who rely on services.

These shifts have not always been explicit, nor widely understood.

Attempts to bring health and social care into closer alignment have often highlighted these underlying questions of structure and accountability – rather than resolving them. Efforts to integrate services have exposed differences in funding models, entitlement and governance that reflect deeper design choices within the system.

Reform therefore requires clarity not only about formal responsibilities, but about how those responsibilities are made real in practice – through commissioning, funding flows, data and accountability.

These questions also extend beyond social care alone, touching on housing, public health and income support. The boundaries between them are often experienced as blurred, even where responsibilities are formally distinct.

HOW IS CONSISTENCY ACHIEVED?

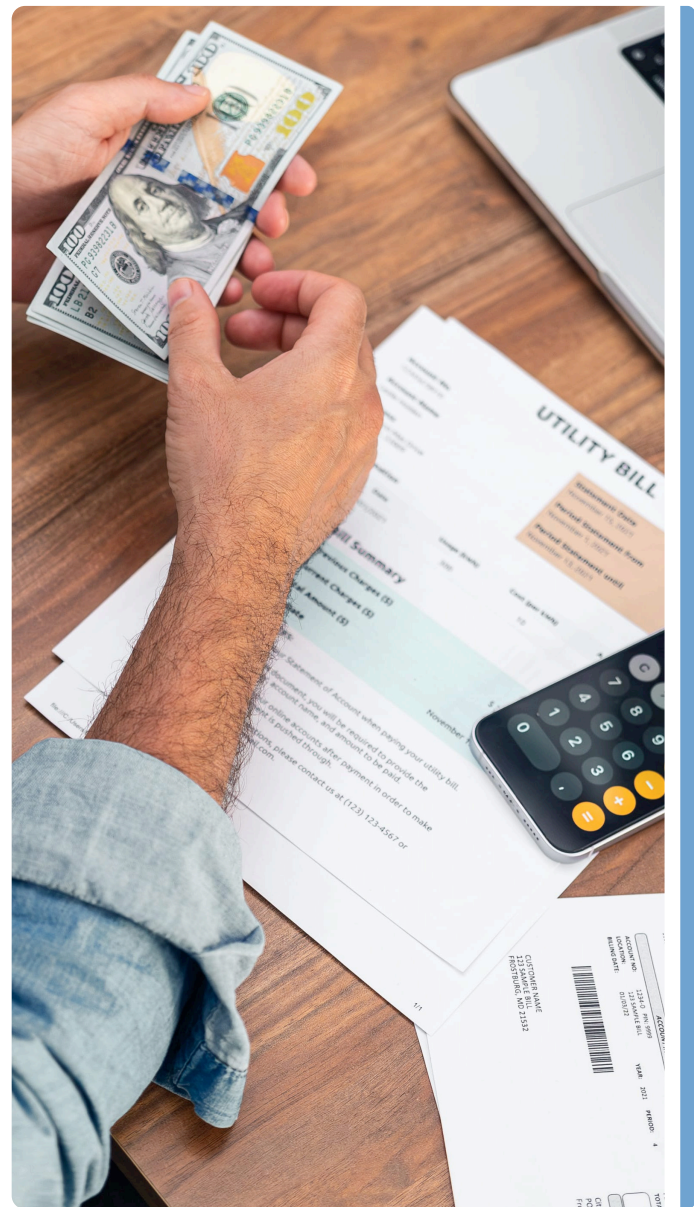
How does the system ensure that people experience reliable, high-quality care wherever they live?

This brings together several elements:

- Workforce stability and capability.
- Standards that clarify expectations.
- The sustainability of providers.
- The capacity to innovate and develop new models of care.

There is a persistent gap between agreement on what good looks like and the consistency with which it is delivered. This is reflected in variation in access, quality and outcomes across different parts of the country, and for different groups of people.

Standards can help to address that gap, but only if they support improvement rather than constrain it. Consistency does not



require uniformity. It requires clarity about outcomes, alongside space for local leadership and provider innovation.

At the same time, reform is delivered through a diverse provider landscape. Provider viability, and the ability to invest and innovate, are part of how the system functions in practice. The resilience of this landscape is shaped by workforce conditions, funding flows and the wider economic environment.

These questions are not abstract. They reflect an existing distribution of responsibility in which individuals, families and independent providers already carry a significant share of cost and risk. Evidence consistently shows that unpaid carers and providers absorb pressures where the system is under strain.

Reform must therefore do more than restate ambition. It must work through how these arrangements are aligned, and where they may need to be rebalanced.

That, in turn, requires making trade-offs explicit. The question is not what the system stands for. It is how its different elements are brought together in a way that can be delivered consistently, understood by the public, and sustained over time.

www.scie.org.uk

VALUING SOCIAL CARE

The care sector is under growing strain from rising demand, funding pressures and workforce shortages. Bethan Evans, CEO of My Choice Healthcare, outlines what ministers need to understand if meaningful reform is to succeed.



Working on the frontline in the care system brings a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities the sector faces – one that isn't always fully understood by government.

After all, how can ministers sitting in local or central government truly grasp the day-to-day realities of delivering care? It's something that has to be experienced first-hand, which is why it's so important that care staff have a voice.

Equally, those receiving care, along with their families, have valuable insights into what the sector is really about. For them, political debates come second to the standard of care on offer. At a vulnerable time in life, what matters most is person-centred, consistent and dedicated care.

In the chaos of political life, the people at the centre of these debates are too often forgotten. Residents, their families, and staff deserve more, and for that to happen, ministers need to truly understand care. Here's what I wish they understood.

■ FUNDING CARE IS NOT A BURDEN

The nation's finances are under pressure, and funding must be allocated fairly across society. But too often, investment in

the care system is framed as a burden. This narrative needs to change.

Rather than focusing solely on how much funding is required, we should consider the cost of not investing enough. As of June 2025, there were more than 350,000 care home residents, according to government data. Leaving so many vulnerable people without adequate support is a risk we simply shouldn't be willing to take.

While an extra £4bn a year is set to be available for adult social care by 2028-2029, this is unlikely to go far enough. Any extra funding is, of course, welcome, but it won't solve the scale of the challenge on its own.

Ministers also need to recognise that the care system doesn't just benefit those currently receiving care – it benefits all of us. A 2024 House of Commons committee report on adult social care reform estimates that every £1 invested in the sector generates a £1.75 return to the wider economy.

The report argues that social care must be seen as an enabler, not a burden. The system supports people to live healthier, more independent lives, helps prevent ill health, boosts employment, and contributes to wider health reform. Ministers



need to understand that this sector is vital for thousands across the country and has enormous potential, but only with the right funding in place.

■ CARE STAFF PAY IS NOT SUSTAINABLE

The hardworking staff who form the backbone of the care system have long been underpaid and undervalued, and ministers must understand that this cannot continue.

This isn't just unfair on those already working in care – it is also having a damaging impact on our ability to attract new people into the profession. Skills for Care reports that 470,000 more workers will be needed by 2040 to meet demand. That challenge will only grow unless pay and conditions improve.

In a government survey of care workers, 60.7% of respondents cited pay levels compared with other sectors as the biggest barrier to recruitment and retention.

In September 2025, the government announced £500m of investment in the first ever fair pay agreement for care workers in England. This is welcome, but it isn't due to come into force until 2028. Ministers need to understand that care workers cannot wait that long for better pay – they need it now. And what about Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland? Fair pay should apply across the UK.

■ THE FUTURE IS DECIDED NOW

Ministers must remember that the decisions made today will determine the future of care.

Most of us will rely on the care system at some point in our lives, and demand is only going to increase. According to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales, the number of people aged over 60 in Wales alone is set to rise to 956,000 in 2026 – around 30% of the population.

An ageing population means rising demand. If the system is already struggling to meet current needs, how will it cope over

the next decade and beyond? Ministers need to understand that what we invest now will determine whether the system can cope in the future. The longer it is allowed to struggle, the harder those problems will be to fix.

More funding would allow us to develop a sustainable care model that will still be standing years from now. With proper investment in staff pay, skills, training and working conditions, we can also be confident in attracting and retaining more people. Care residents deserve a stable, supportive team – and that is only possible when staff themselves are properly valued.

“The decisions made today will determine the future of care.”

■ FINAL THOUGHTS

There's no doubt that ministers at every level have difficult decisions to make, but the care system must be taken seriously when considering the health of our current and future population.

Care can only work at its best when funding is prioritised and not treated as a burden. Budgets may be tight, but the most vulnerable people in society should not pay the price.

Equally, ministers must understand that without fair pay for care workers, the system risks buckling under the strain. These changes need to happen now. Time is not on our side, and continued delay will only leave the sector in a more fragile state.

www.mychoicehealthcare.co.uk



DIGITAL SAFETY IS CARE SAFETY

Michelle Corrigan, Chief Executive of Digital Care Hub, explains why cyber security is now a safeguarding issue for care providers, and what practical steps managers and owners can take.

A care provider receives what looks like an official Home Office email. It says there is a problem with their visa sponsor account and urges them to click a link or open an attachment. The message feels credible and time-critical. Someone enters their login details. Suddenly, the organisation's Sponsor Management System account is at risk, with possible disruption, fraud and consequences for staff whose right to work depends on that system.

That is not hypothetical. Digital Care Hub recently shared a scam alert about emails targeting care providers using the UK Visas and Immigration Sponsor Management System. Some accounts were taken over. For services already under pressure, an incident like this is not just an IT problem. It can affect staffing, compliance, confidence and the safe running of care.

That is why digital safety needs to sit alongside the other safety issues care leaders manage every day: medication, manual handling, infection control, fire safety, safeguarding and staffing.

This is not something for the IT company to sort out in the background. If staff cannot open care records, check medicines information, see the rota or contact families, the impact is immediate. If personal information is stolen, changed or shared with the wrong person, people can be harmed.

■ TECHNOLOGY CAN MAKE CARE SAFER

Technology can do a huge amount of good. Digital care records give staff quick access to accurate information. Role-based access means people only see what they need. Audit trails show who has opened or changed a record. Sensors and dashboards can help managers spot patterns, such as increased falls risk or repeated incidents.

There is evidence behind this. CQC says good records underpin safe, effective, compassionate care, and that digital records can help staff respond more quickly, share information safely and reduce risks. The Digitising Social Care Programme has also highlighted that acoustic monitoring can reduce falls in care homes by 20% or more – and we have seen examples where it reduced falls by over 50%, and reduced hospital admissions by almost 80%.

■ THE RISK IS REAL AND GROWING

Care services hold some of the most sensitive information about people's lives: health conditions, medicines, care needs, family circumstances, finances, capacity and safeguarding concerns. This makes social care data valuable to criminals, who can use it for fraud, identity theft, scams, extortion or targeted pressure.



Research on cyber security in adult social care found that 90% of providers say they know a great deal or fair amount about good cyber security practice. But awareness is not the same as resilience. Seventeen per cent do not use any measures to identify cyber threats.

There is progress too. More than three-quarters (76%) of care providers now have the Data Security and Protection Toolkit in place. The next step is making sure annual self-assessments reflect what actually happens on the floor, in the office and across every system.

The wider UK picture remains stark. The government's Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2025/2026 found that 43% of UK businesses had identified a breach or attack in the previous 12 months, around 612,000 businesses. For charities, the figure was 30%, or around 57,000. Among organisations affected, phishing remained the most common and disruptive type.

Cyber risk is not limited to deliberate attacks. Many breaches are caused by preventable mistakes: an email sent to the wrong person, a lost device, a weak password or information shared in the wrong way. Whether the cause is criminal or accidental, providers need to prevent, spot and respond quickly.

■ CYBER SECURITY IS SAFEGUARDING

Care providers already understand safeguarding as protecting people from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Data protection and cyber security belong in that same conversation.

Think about the information in your service: care records, financial details, staff files, family contacts, medication information and

safeguarding notes. In the wrong hands, that data could be used to scam, pressure or exploit someone. Digital routes can make harm faster and harder to spot.

YOU MAY BE THE VICTIM EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT THE TARGET

It is easy to think, 'Why would anyone target us?' The truth is, they may not. Many cyber incidents are automated, opportunistic or linked to another organisation.

Supply chains are a key part of the risk. Care providers rely on digital care planning, e-rostering, payroll, NHS and local authority portals, IT support, finance systems, devices and cloud services. In adult social care research, 44% of incidents among providers who had experienced an attack originated from a third-party organisation.

So, ask: who has access to our data, where is it stored, how quickly would we be told about an incident, and how would we keep care going if a supplier system was unavailable?

AI BRINGS OPPORTUNITY AND RISK

Artificial intelligence could help social care reduce admin, use information better and identify risks earlier. But it also raises questions about privacy, bias, accountability and security. Criminals are using AI too, including to create more convincing phishing emails, fake invoices and impersonation attempts.

The AI in Care Alliance, which is currently being formed, will aim to help the sector explore ethical and responsible use of AI. The message is not 'don't innovate'. It is 'innovate safely', with governance, accountability and strong data protection from the start.

TRAINING IS CRITICAL

Staff are often the first line of defence. Cyber security training should be treated as seriously as manual handling, medication management, fire safety or safeguarding. We would not expect staff to manage medicines safely without training. We should not expect them to spot phishing or respond to a suspected cyber incident without training either.

Training should be practical and repeated. Staff need to know why multi-factor authentication matters, how to recognise

suspicious messages, how to report concerns quickly and when to pause and check before clicking.

WHAT TO DO NOW

No provider can remove every risk. The aim is to reduce the chance of an incident, respond quickly if something happens and recover safely.

- Complete and regularly review the Data Security and Protection Toolkit.
- Use multi-factor authentication wherever possible.
- Keep software and devices updated.
- Limit access so staff only see what they need.
- Back up important information and test that backups work.
- Review supplier arrangements.
- Train staff and refresh awareness regularly.
- Have a simple incident response plan.
- Do not click links or open attachments in unexpected emails. Go directly to official websites instead.

"So, ask: who has access to our data, where is it stored, how quickly would we be told about an incident, and how would we keep care going if a supplier system was unavailable?"

Digital Care Hub's cyber security guidance, DSPT support and Digital Health Check service can help providers take stock, spot gaps and prioritise next steps. The Health Check is free for eligible adult social care providers and offers practical, judgement-free recommendations.

THIS ISSUE IS NOT GOING AWAY

Digital innovation can make care safer, more efficient and more person-centred. But only if safety and security are built in. For care home managers and owners, the message is simple: digital safety is care safety. Protecting data is part of protecting people, supporting staff and protecting the future of your business.

www.digitalcarehub.co.uk



RETHINKING ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

Tom Planck, MD of John Planck Ltd and sole UK distributor for bathroom specialist FROST Denmark, explores how combining accessibility, practicality and strong aesthetic appeal ensures residents feel safe, cared for and truly at home.

One of the biggest challenges for interior designers working in care environments is creating accessible spaces that are functional and safe yet still feel comfortable and visually appealing.

Unfortunately, too often, accessibility is viewed as a technical and compliance-led requirement, rather than a design opportunity, meaning the focus tends to be on meeting minimum Part M standards and Care Quality Commission (CQC) expectations, instead of prioritising comfort, ease of use and aesthetic design.

Although considerable effort does go into aligning tiling and colour schemes to create a familiar, domestic feel, it is the more functional elements that often lack cohesion and create a clinical feel. Fixtures such as grab rails, foldable seats and arm supports are typically specified with practicality as the primary focus, rather than design, resulting in the installation of products that look institutional and don't match the aesthetics of the wider interior design scheme.

“Sleek, ergonomic foldaway seats help maximise space while enabling safer moving and handling for carers.”

A lack of availability of stylish accessible bathroom products is largely why this has been the case. Items such as grab rails, foldable seats and arm supports have historically been designed for their functional and medical purpose, with little thought given to aesthetics. However, leading bathroom product manufacturers have recognised this issue, responding with a raft of more design conscious accessible designs.

For example, slimmer profile grab rails and arm supports are now more widely available which not only look good but are also designed for greater ergonomic comfort and use in tighter spaces. These products are also available in a variety of on-trend finishes, including matt, brushed and polished options and in black, gold, copper and steel colours, making it easier to coordinate them into any design scheme. As well as looking great, these products are also available in materials like unlacquered copper and brass, which can help to reduce the transmission of bacteria because of their antiviral properties.

Sleeker, more discreet foldaway seats are also available for shower areas and other spaces where those who may struggle to stand for extended periods need them. Designed with ergonomics in mind, they feature contoured surfaces for added comfort and are constructed from slip-resistant and easy-to-clean materials that enhance safety and hygiene. These seating solutions not only



maximise available space but also support carers by enabling safer moving and handling, ultimately improving workflow in assisted bathing environments.

Accessible bathroom products are an essential part of the care environment. By having elements that are comfortable and easy to use, combined with a softer, more residential aesthetic, these thoughtful design choices not only look great but can help residents feel more confident and independent in the bathroom environment, supporting dignity and overall wellbeing.

In care home settings, the importance of having a safe, practical, yet beautifully designed bathroom cannot be underestimated. Surroundings can have a major impact on resident wellbeing, cognition and behaviour – especially in dementia care – and creating spaces that feel warm, familiar and non-institutional can play an important role in reducing anxiety, promoting independence and ensuring residents really do feel at home.

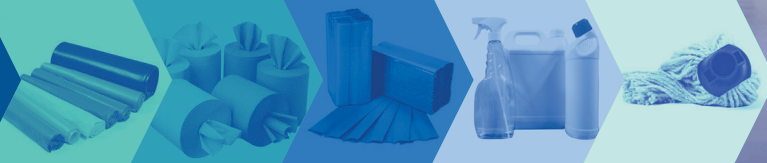
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DESIGNED FOR DEMENTIA

Charlotte Lloyd, Commissioning and Operations Developments Director at Exemplar Health Care, explains why evidence-led design is as important as clinical expertise in creating environments where people living with dementia can thrive.



At Exemplar Health Care, we know the environment someone lives in can have a profound impact on their wellbeing, independence, and quality of life, particularly for people living with dementia. The way a space feels, and whether it helps reduce anxiety, can shape everyday experiences in ways that are easy to underestimate until you see it working in practice.

That's why we ensure every new home is designed not only to meet clinical needs, but to support people to live well, feel safe at home, and maintain dignity and confidence in their daily routines.

■ GETTING DESIGN PRINCIPLES RIGHT

Our new home, Springfield Vale, is one of the most exciting examples of this approach. Designed in collaboration with the University of Stirling, it brings together research, innovation, and real-world insight to create a truly dementia-led environment, inside and out.

Following the home opening in February, we hope that it will be first of our homes to achieve the Stirling Gold Environment Award from the Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC) at the University of Stirling.

A few years ago, I completed a course at the University of Stirling focused on dementia design, and it reinforced something we strongly believe at Exemplar Health Care: good design isn't simply about aesthetics, but about how a space functions, feels, and supports the people living within it. It's about removing risks, supporting people to navigate their surroundings safely, reducing anxiety and agitation to improve quality of life for those living with dementia, and fostering a sense of emotional wellbeing and security.

Throughout the design process, we worked in close collaboration with the University team, partnering to put their world-leading dementia design expertise at the heart of our approach to develop the home, and balancing research principles with the realities of delivering complex care. Because dementia-friendly design isn't about one or two standout features, it's the accumulation of subtle, thoughtful details that support independence.

■ PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

At Springfield Vale, we've focused on key environmental elements to help residents move through the home with greater confidence, using colour, contrast and clear visual cues to make key features easier to identify, from handrails and signage to ensuring everyday items like televisions stand out against surrounding walls. We've also introduced vision panels in communal areas, allowing residents to understand the purpose of a room before entering, reducing uncertainty and supporting choice.

Lighting has been another major focus, with the goal to support the circadian rhythm, reduce anxiety and anticipatory agitation with a non-pharmacological approach to sleep hygiene support. We've tailored lighting across the home to support comfort and calm throughout the day and evening. Sensory enhancements are also integrated throughout, from assisted bathrooms with hydrotherapy features to interior finishes that create a more homely feel while still supporting safety.

The environment is the right balance of stimulating, yet comfortable with meaningful and familiar design features. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach, however we have designed spaces to embody person-centred approaches, reflecting culture, preferences and enabling social connection within the environment, offering multiple communal spaces and connection to nature.

When it comes to clinical care, we've embedded lived experience and insights to ensure people can feel supported in ways that suit them. For example, rather than holding GP appointments in bedrooms, we've incorporated a dedicated consultation room to protect both privacy and dignity and the homeliness of personal spaces.

Outdoor space is equally important to wellbeing. The garden has been designed to be safe and enriching, with colourful sensory planting and a wheelchair-accessible wonder path that uses contrast to reduce the risk of trips and falls. There are social seating areas, private screened spaces, and features that encourage purposeful activity such as potting and vegetable areas, supported by clear signage throughout.

Creating a home led by dementia design principles isn't only about residents, but the people around them. The Hub and dining area has already received positive feedback from commissioners and families, offering a welcoming space for relatives to spend time with loved ones in a way that feels relaxed and enjoyable.

We've also prioritised excellent colleague facilities, including enhanced staff rooms and outdoor areas, helping to support wellbeing, morale and retention, because supporting colleagues is fundamental to delivering outstanding care.

I BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Translating academic principles into bricks and mortar isn't easy, but Springfield Vale reflects what can be achieved when providers commit to making design, research, and innovation work together. This home represents a step forward not only for Exemplar Health Care, but for the wider sector as we prepare for a future of evolving care and dementia needs.

Ultimately, environments matter. When we design with lived experience in mind, supported by evidence and shaped by detail, we create spaces that promote independence, reduce distress, and help people feel at home. And in dementia care, that can make all the difference.

www.exemplarhc.com



THE ART OF LIVING

What if design could change the way we look at aging? In Canada, the shared living spaces of the new Cloria residence, designed by Taktik, offer an experience that breaks away from the conventions of senior living environments, encouraging autonomy, freedom, and the desire to live together.

Since the creation of Cloria living environments in 2018, Taktik has been designing the heart of senior residences: common spaces conceived to foster connections, extend the feeling of home, and support a new way of experiencing retirement.

In this residence located in Beloeil, the layout proposes a coherent framework where private and collective spaces naturally interact, serving daily encounters and exchanges.

"The success of the project lies precisely in the fact that it doesn't feel like entering a retirement residence," explains Alexa Adam, interior designer and project manager at Taktik. "Of course, we ensured ergonomics adapted to the users by avoiding seating that is too low, but above all, we sought to break free from the

aesthetic codes usually associated with this type of environment, in favour of a more contemporary and universal language."

From the moment you enter, the gold zinc logo elegantly affirms Cloria's identity. Around it, a bright waiting lounge takes shape, where a signature bench defines the space. The design is thoughtful, with clean lines and light fabrics. Concrete, metal, and pale wood form a restrained, contemporary palette, warmed by comforting textures and colours.

The heart of the project is organised around a landscaped circular hub. The custom circular planter at the centre becomes both a spatial and social anchor. From there, corridors extend in a star-shaped layout, distributing the different areas. This



Photo credit: Maxime Brouillet



Photo credit: Maxime Brouillet



Photo credit: Maxime Brouillet

configuration encourages intuitive wayfinding and multiplies opportunities to meet a neighbour, exchange a few words, or be drawn into an activity.

"The common spaces support spontaneous activities," adds Alexa. "Here, residents take charge of community life. There is no programmed calendar of activities organised by the residence."

The billiard room invites friendly games where camaraderie naturally takes hold. Banquettes and tables lend themselves to lively evenings under lighting that softens the atmosphere. A large wall-mounted library encourages residents to share their reading. The fluted glass partition filters light, preserving intimacy while maintaining a visual connection with the corridor.

The kitchen area, with its sage green cabinetry, is designed for cooking together and allows residents to host their guests. The large stainless-steel counter and central island encourage collective meal preparation, turning each recipe into a moment of conviviality. A light wood slatted screen wraps the space and creates separation from circulation areas. A sliding curtain allows the space around the large solid wood table to be adjusted, creating either a more intimate or open atmosphere, depending on the group or occasion.

Across the corridor, a dining nook is organised around a large corner banquette and bistro-style tables. Planters punctuate

the space, while a full-height mirror enhances both perspective and brightness.

Finally, the lounge area is undoubtedly the residents' favourite place to unwind. Centred around a gas fireplace, rounded banquettes and armchairs invite contemplation. Vegetal and mineral tones reinforce the sense of calm. It is a cozy retreat, ideal for reading, quiet conversations, or simply enjoying time together.

Two enclosed rooms complete the ensemble: a small room for more focused board game sessions, and a meeting room equipped for presentations and videoconferencing.

"In retirement, people want to enjoy life, stay active, and keep moving – and the space reflects these aspirations: living in an environment that supports activity, autonomy, and sociability," says Nicola Tardif-Bourdages, designer, founder, and president of Taktik Design.

Here, every space has been designed to encourage social life while respecting each individual's pace and wellbeing. The result is a delicate balance between community and intimacy, supported by custom-designed elements that foster connection and shared experiences.

<https://taktikdesign.com>



Photo credit: Maxime Brouillet



Photo credit: Maxime Brouillet

THE POWER OF THE KEY

Simon Wilson, Business Development Manager (Healthcare) at Abloy UK, discusses the shift from traditional key management to smarter, more secure access control in healthcare.

Access control plays a critical role in healthcare environments, where security, safety and day-to-day operations are closely connected. From controlled drug cabinets and patient records to restricted wards and plant rooms, managing who can access specific areas is essential. In many cases, this responsibility still relies heavily on traditional keys.

However, as healthcare facilities become more complex, the limitations of purely mechanical systems are becoming harder to manage. The focus is shifting from issuing keys to controlling access in a more flexible, visible and accountable way.

THE LIMITS OF TRADITIONAL KEY MANAGEMENT

Mechanical keys have served healthcare environments for decades, but they introduce challenges that become more visible at scale. In a typical hospital setting, hundreds or even thousands of keys may be in circulation, while staff roles frequently change across shifts and departments. At the same time, contractors and temporary staff often require short-term access, and sensitive areas must remain tightly controlled at all times. Managing access effectively under these conditions can become increasingly complex when relying solely on traditional key-based systems.

In this environment, traditional physical keys can create both risk and inefficiency. Lost or unreturned keys can trigger urgent and costly rekeying, particularly for high-risk areas such as pharmacies or controlled drug cabinets. Static permissions mean access cannot be easily adjusted when roles change or staff rotate, while limited accountability can make it difficult to determine who accessed a space during incidents or audits. At the same time, the administrative burden grows as teams attempt to track, issue and retrieve keys manually. Together, these challenges can impact staff time, operational efficiency and, ultimately, patient care.

CONTROLLING ACCESS TO HIGH-RISK AND SENSITIVE AREAS

Healthcare environments contain a wide range of spaces that require different levels of security and control, from wards and clinical treatment areas to pharmacies, controlled drug storage facilities, medical records rooms, laboratories, specialist units, plant rooms and critical infrastructure. While each area presents its own risks, they all share a common requirement: ensuring that only authorised individuals can gain access, at the appropriate time and for the appropriate purpose.

Modern access control solutions help achieve this through features such as time-bound permissions, which ensure access is granted only for as long as required, and role-based controls

that align permissions with job functions rather than individual keys. Access rights can also be revoked immediately when circumstances change, while detailed audit trails provide a clear record of who accessed a space and when. This level of control is particularly important in areas such as pharmacies, where strict traceability is essential, and medical records rooms, where protecting sensitive data and maintaining compliance are critical.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF LOST KEYS

Lost keys remain one of the most common challenges in healthcare facilities. In traditional key-based systems, a missing key can create security concerns, trigger emergency rekeying programmes, generate significant replacement costs and cause disruption for both staff and patients.

Modern electromechanical access solutions substantially reduce these risks. If a key is lost, it can be electronically deactivated, removing any immediate security threat without the need to



replace locks. New access rights can then be issued quickly, helping maintain operational continuity while avoiding the expense and disruption associated with large-scale rekeying.

SUPPORTING STAFF EFFICIENCY IN FAST-PACED ENVIRONMENTS

Healthcare professionals work in demanding, time-critical environments where access control systems should support efficiency rather than create barriers. Modern solutions help reduce the time spent managing physical keys, issuing replacements and resolving access issues, freeing staff to focus on patient care.

They also provide the flexibility to adjust access permissions quickly as employees move between departments, roles or shifts. By enabling authorised staff to move efficiently throughout the areas they need to access, while minimising delays caused by

missing or incorrect keys, these systems contribute to smoother workflows and more effective day-to-day operations.

Modern access control solutions build on the familiarity of the key while transforming how it functions. Rather than being a fixed object, the key becomes part of a wider, connected system. Digital keys can be updated or revoked remotely, while access rights can be programmed according to an individual's role, location or working hours. Every access event is recorded through detailed audit trails, providing a clear record of activity, and centralised management platforms offer full visibility and control across multiple sites and departments. Together, these capabilities enable a more flexible, secure and efficient approach to access management.

This evolution allows healthcare providers to manage access dynamically, rather than relying on static physical distribution. The result is a key that actively supports governance, compliance and operational performance.

For example, a nurse moving between wards or a facilities team accessing multiple plant areas can do so without needing multiple physical keys or manual intervention, helping staff to focus on patient care rather than administrative tasks.

ENHANCING PATIENT SAFETY THROUGH BETTER CONTROL

Access control plays a direct role in patient safety, even if it is not always visible in day-to-day operations. The ability to manage and monitor who can enter specific areas is crucial in maintaining a safe and secure healthcare environment.

Effective systems help prevent unauthorised access to restricted or vulnerable areas, while also protecting controlled drugs and sensitive materials. This is particularly important in environments such as pharmacies, treatment rooms and records storage, where both security and compliance are critical.

They also support the creation of secure environments for patients, especially in high dependency or specialist units where access must be carefully managed. In addition, access control contributes to safeguarding by ensuring that only authorised individuals can enter certain spaces at the appropriate times.

By improving both control and visibility, modern access solutions play an important role in creating a safer, more secure environment for patients, staff and visitors.

THE ROLE OF ABLOY UK

Access control and key management play a critical role in securing sensitive healthcare environments. Systems such as Aperio and SMARTair provide flexible, scalable security for areas like ICUs, pharmacies and restricted wards, where access needs to be tightly controlled but easy to manage. These solutions allow permissions to be updated quickly as staff move between roles or departments, supporting both security and day-to-day efficiency.

For higher risk applications such as drug storage and critical assets, PROTEC2 CLIQ is widely used to manage keys and control access to medication. By providing programmable, traceable access with full audit trails, it helps healthcare providers strengthen governance and support compliance with government requirements, while reducing the risks associated with lost or unmanaged keys.

www.abloy.co.uk



SAFE HANDS

Investing in staff alarm systems not only helps keep care workers safe but contributes to enhanced treatment outcomes and life satisfaction, says Allan Aikman at Pinpoint.

July is Good Care Month, a national campaign that recognises the vital contributions of care professionals, raises awareness for the sector and inspires people to consider a career in care. However, unless you work within – or adjacent to – the sector, it's likely Good Care Month will have previously passed you by.

The reality is our care workers often go overlooked and undervalued. New figures from the HSE reveal over 12,000 violent attacks have taken place toward residential care staff in the last 10 years, with minimal year-by-year variation. For a sector where 85% of staff report being the subject of violent behaviour at work, it is clear that more must be done to protect our care workers.

If we really want to celebrate care workers and build a strong UK care workforce, we must first invest in the safety of staff, creating a secure working environment that enables employees to carry out their duties without the risk of abuse.

■ PART OF THE JOB?

While often unintentional, the nature of their conditions and various medications can cause some care home residents to present volatile and aggressive behaviour. Carers are frequently exposed to kicking, biting, hitting and spitting, alongside verbal abuse and threats, with data indicating an average of two assaults on staff in England every day. The frequency and consistency of these incidents have contributed to a general apathy toward violence, where professional carers have become accustomed to hostile behaviour from patients, accepting it as 'part of the job'.

As a result, we are seeing poor job satisfaction, high rates of absenteeism and increasing staff turnover in the care workforce. Far from attracting new talent, the sector is facing a recruitment crisis, struggling to fill the ever-growing vacancies and putting further strain on existing staff.

■ DESIGNING FOR SAFETY

Staff safety must be a priority for every health and social care environment. And, while de-escalation training and no-violence policies certainly have their place, in the often-unpredictable

nature of a care residence, advanced staff safety systems are a vital asset to protect both care staff and residents.

Staff alarm systems, like those provided by Pinpoint, enable employees to swiftly summon assistance when needed. With the simple press of a button on their personal alarm, care workers alert colleagues to the exact location and severity of an incident, eliciting an immediate response to intervene and offer support.

The speed and precision of these systems are essential. Taking mere milliseconds from alarm activation to information display, Pinpoint's staff alarm system enables the response team to quickly de-escalate hostile behaviour and disrupt violent attacks on staff. What's more, the knowledge that staff can easily call for help can deter aggressive outbursts from taking place to begin with.

In non-violent incidents, such as a resident choking or taking a fall, staff are quickly alerted to attend the scene and provide the appropriate help, thereby enhancing the safety of all on-site.

■ CARING WITH CARE

The presence of staff safety alarms gives care workers peace of mind and assurance that their wellbeing is a priority. This was certainly the case in St Brigid's Hospital's Creagh Suite, which offers long-stay, continuing care for residents living with the most severe symptoms of dementia. The addition of Pinpoint's P2 System reassured staff of their safety, strengthened their relationship with patients and enhanced the quality of care delivered. Without the threat of violence or repeated abusive incidents interrupting their day, care workers can focus on completing their responsibilities to the highest standard. Consequently, care residents receive greater levels of care, contributing to enhanced treatment outcomes and life satisfaction.

This Good Care Month let's honour the incredible work that carers do by investing in systems that will protect them from the threat of abuse and maximise their safety while at work. Doing so is crucial for the longevity of the care workforce and long-term treatment outcomes of those who need it most.

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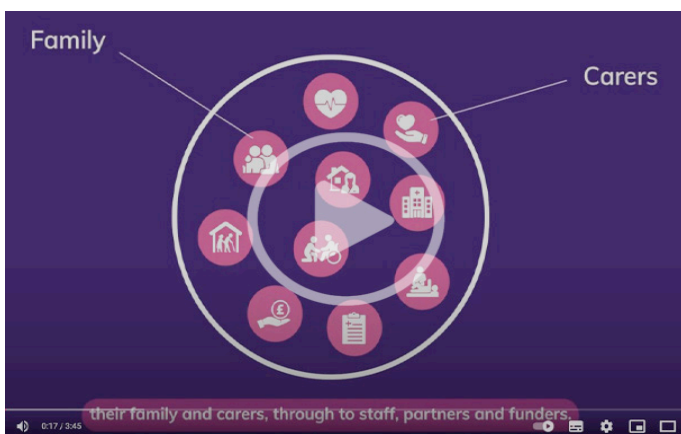
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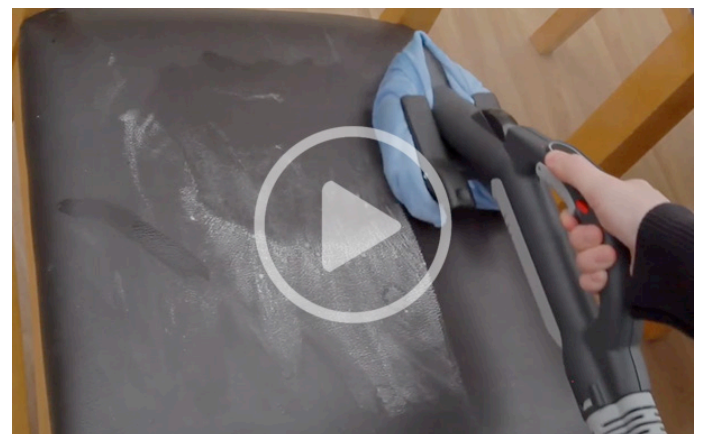
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SIMPLER RECYCLING & SMARTER WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mia Fisher, Marketing Communications Executive at Waste Managed, provides a guide for care homes to comply with new Simpler Recycling legislation and shares how smart waste systems can save time, money, and stress in the long run.



In April 2025, the Simpler Recycling legislation came into force across England, starting a new era of waste separation requirements for businesses, including care homes. This legislation has been designed to support the UK's long-term environmental goals, particularly the elimination of avoidable waste and increasing the ability to reuse materials by 2050, as outlined in the government's Resources and Waste Strategy.

For the care sector, daily operations generate a mix of waste streams, from food and packaging to paper documents and general waste. The introduction of these changes has had a large impact; they are more demanding. For many operators, this means taking on additional short-term costs. From investing in more bins to adjusting supplier contracts. However, these changes also push the sector toward a cleaner, more compliant future.

Care homes with 10 or more full-time employees are required to segregate specific recyclable materials: dry mixed recycling, glass, and food waste. From March 2027, businesses with under 10 employees will also be required to follow the regulations.

Care homes must also accommodate additional waste streams, such as sanitary, pharmaceutical, sharp, offensive, and confidential waste, to prevent contamination, comply with regulations, and minimise landfill impact.

Enforcement for this legislation will fall under local authorities and the Environment Agency. In Scotland, similar waste segregation requirements are already in place, with enforcement carried out by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Similarly, in Wales, legislation was implemented in 2024 to enforce the separation of waste with additional requirements, including separate streams for paper, card, metal, plastics, cartons, unsold textiles, and small waste electrical items.

In Northern Ireland, legislation currently only impacts the separation of food waste, but they are likely to follow similar rules to Simpler Recycling in due course.

Ultimately, Simpler Recycling offers an opportunity. Though some care providers may initially view it as another compliance hurdle, those who proactively embrace it can future-proof their waste systems, reduce long-term costs, and align themselves with the growing public demand for sustainable healthcare practices.

WASTE SEPARATION GUIDELINES FOR CARE HOMES IN ENGLAND

As mentioned previously, Simpler Recycling legislation introduces a clear system for waste separation and recycling in care homes. This system focuses on separating three primary waste streams from general waste: dry mixed recycling, glass, and food waste.

Dry Mixed Recycling includes various materials commonly found in most businesses: cardboard boxes, plastic packaging, tin cans, and office paper. These materials can be placed in a single bin provided by a registered waste carrier but they must be clean, dry, and free of contamination to avoid landfill disposal.

Glass Waste must be segregated entirely, including bottles and jars. Care homes should have separate bottle bins in all relevant departments and ensure recyclable glass is not confused with clinical or hazardous glass waste.

Managing food waste in care homes presents challenges due to volume and hygiene requirements. It is good practice that food waste is collected in designated caddies with biodegradable liners to minimise contamination and odour. Kitchen staff should separate food scraps during preparation and ensure food waste bins are available in all necessary areas.

Compliance with waste separation guidelines applies to all areas of the care home, including kitchens, dining halls, laundry departments, resident bedrooms, staff quarters, and offices.

■ WHY COMPLIANCE MATTERS FOR CARE HOMES

In an industry characterised by strict regulations and ongoing workforce challenges, the prospect of adding more compliance rules may seem overwhelming for care homes. However, in the realm of waste management, non-compliance goes beyond mere checkboxes; it carries real consequences. Poor waste practices can impact CQC ratings, which directly affect a care home's reputation. Falling short in compliance risks not only regulatory penalties but also potential loss of trust from families and commissioners.

■ REPUTATIONAL RISK

The environmental performance of businesses is now viewed as a crucial measure of corporate responsibility. Families searching for care homes consider factors such as cleanliness, sustainability, and overall ethos. Non-compliance could result in negative reviews or a loss of trust.

■ OPERATIONAL DISRUPTION

If a waste provider rejects a contaminated bin, the care home must deal with overflowing rubbish, odours, pest infestations, and logistical hurdles. This can disrupt regular waste collection schedules, leading to additional costs to resolve the issue.

■ FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Although implementing proper waste segregation may require initial investments (such as bin labels, waste caddies, and staff training), the financial penalties for non-compliance can be much greater. Additionally, the rising costs of general waste disposal, driven by increases in landfill taxes, further exacerbate the financial impact of non-compliance.

■ GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Smart waste management starts with the fundamentals: are your bins the right size? Oversized bins take up space and cost more. Undersized bins overflow, attract pests and result in excess weight charges. Are your collections too frequent or too infrequent? Reviewing your schedule ensures you're not overpaying or creating hygiene risks.

■ TRAINING YOUR TEAM

Training your team is the foundation for long-term success. The quality of your recycling outcomes will depend on how well your staff understand and commit to the process. Here is how to set them up for lasting success.

STEP 1: EARLY, CLEAR COMMUNICATION

The first step in change management is clarity. Inform your team early on about what's coming, when, and most importantly, why. Explain that this isn't just about ticking compliance boxes, it's about cleaner environments for residents and cost-saving for the business.

Use various communication methods to suit different staff preferences. That might include a kick-off meeting, follow-up emails, printed flyers, or posters by the rota board.

STEP 2: TAILORED, ROLE-SPECIFIC TRAINING

Not all staff handle waste in the same way, so training should never be one-size-fits-all. With a shocking 30% of the mixed recycling processed at a Materials Recovery Facility either contaminated with, or simply being, food waste, kitchen staff in particular need detailed guidance on how to manage it correctly, and how to prevent liquids or packaging from contaminating food waste in the first place.

Domestic teams need clarity on how to separate certain recyclables during cleaning. Especially with personal hygiene waste or the disposal of PPE, as these often require different handling. It's essential to avoid any contamination with clinical waste, as this can create compliance risks and increase disposal costs.

Interactive, department-specific sessions help boost retention. Staff should leave knowing exactly how to sort waste and avoid contamination.

STEP 3: MAKE TRAINING FLEXIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE

Staff turnover and reliance on agency workers are a reality in care settings. That's why flexibility is key. Consider creating short refresher videos accessible by QR code; you can stick these in induction folders.

Visual learners benefit from diagrams and posters that can be positioned next to the bins. Others prefer hands-on practice. Make sure your system can cater to both. That way, they will have the tools to get it right.

STEP 4: CONTINUOUS AUDITING AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

A 'set it and forget it' approach will not work here. Instead, create a rhythm of review and response. Regular audits of bin contamination, fill levels, and placement can highlight where things are working and where you need a reset.

STEP 5: REINFORCE

Behavioural science tells us that people repeat what's rewarded. Celebrate departments with the cleanest waste streams. Offer small perks, even just a sweet treat in the staff room. In addition, public recognition during team meetings can go a long way.

Reinforce the wins: "Since we launched this new system, contamination is down 40%." Share results. Make people feel part of something bigger.

■ CONCLUSION: TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Simpler Recycling is a driver for transformation in all care homes across England. By embracing smart systems, practical changes, and team-wide engagement, care homes can build a cleaner, more sustainable future without adding strain to already busy teams. Every small change, from clearer bin signage to empowered waste champions, contributes to a larger impact: reduced costs, safer environments, and a care culture that values sustainability.

Now is the time to act. Talk to your waste provider. Audit your current processes. Introduce or run a refresher training programme. But, most importantly, stay compliant, avoid disruption, or financial penalties.

www.wastemanaged.co.uk



WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

From smarter stock management to creative menu planning, Allmanhall outlines simple steps care homes can take to cut food waste and save money.

Around a third of all the food produced globally is never eaten. This means over 30% of your care home's food budget is going straight into the bin.

Food waste is also having a real impact on climate change, contributing almost 10% of total man-made greenhouse gas emissions. It isn't surprising then that one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is to halve global food waste by 2030.

Cutting global food waste by half would add a fifth to the world's total food supply. This is highly significant when facing the challenge of how to feed a growing global population, sustainably.

The UK alone throws away around 9.5m tonnes of food waste in a single year. According to WRAP, food waste generated by the hospitality and food service sector makes up 12% of the total UK food waste post-farm gate, at 1.1m tonnes every year. In fact, 75% of the food wasted could have been eaten, costing us £3.2bn.

For care home catering teams, tackling food waste helps to save costs, improve efficiency, and boost sustainability. So, what are the biggest food waste losers?

Bread is one of the most wasted items within the food-service sector. It is used throughout almost every mealtime, whether as toast for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch or a side roll during dinner. It is estimated that approximately 900,000 tonnes of bread are wasted each year, both at the production and consumer levels.

Potatoes are another culprit. Each year, around 750,000 tonnes of potatoes are wasted, often due to discarded peelings. Many care home catering teams routinely remove peels for their recipes but leaving them on is better for the health of your residents – the skin

contains a significant amount of fibre, potassium, antioxidants, and other nutrients, making it a valuable source of nutrition.

Bananas are one of the quickest decaying fruits, with their lifespan often decreasing due to mishandling. Personal preference sees many ripe bananas being sent to recycling, despite being still perfectly edible. Over-ripe bananas can be used for banana bread, or a nutritious smoothie with other over-ripe fruit that would otherwise be thrown away.

WHAT CAN CARE HOME CATERING TEAMS DO TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE?

Avoid overbuying stock: Only purchase what you need. This is especially important for perishable products. While you may be tempted to stock up in case of delivery issues or shortages in the supply chain, overbuying ultimately leads to more food waste and therefore higher costs.

“Over 30% of your care home's food budget is going straight into the bin.”

Store food correctly: Ensure that food in fridges and freezers is stored at the correct temperature and rotate your stock appropriately, particularly perishable items.

Label food correctly: If you store food into different containers, make sure to clearly label it with allergens, date information and a product description. Keeping stock organised helps with knowing what you have and when to use it by.



Keep a stock inventory: Conduct regular stock checks to monitor what's nearing its expiration date and create dishes that incorporate those ingredients. Use the 'first in, first out' (FIFO) method to ensure older stock is used before new deliveries. Efficient inventory management reduces the likelihood of food going to waste due to expiration or spoilage.

Ensure deliveries match orders: Make sure to only accept what you ordered, and that the product is of good quality and within its use by date.

Engage in staff training: Staff play a pivotal role in reducing food waste. Train them to handle food efficiently, minimise prep waste, and recognise when to adjust portion sizes. Encourage a culture of mindfulness around food waste and consider offering incentives for waste reduction.

Use accurate portion control: One of the most effective ways to reduce food waste is through accurate portion control. Overestimating portions often leads to excess food being thrown away. Use portioning tools such as scoops, ladles or scales to ensure consistency. Ensure your portion specification matches the requirements of your residents.

Keep your menu simple: Strategic menu planning can significantly reduce food waste. The more extensive your menu the more stock you need to hold, heightening the risk of unnecessary waste. Design menus that use similar ingredients across multiple dishes to maximise ingredient usage.

Don't peel your vegetables: This not only boosts the nutrition of your dishes, but it also saves time and effort for your kitchen staff. If you do feel it necessary to peel vegetables, use the peelings to make stock, or to blend into soup.

Repurpose leftover ingredients: Get creative with leftovers. Turn yesterday's unused ingredients into today's specials or garnishes. For example, stale bread can be turned into croutons or pangritata. Repurposing ingredients not only reduces waste but can also add variety to your menu.

Monitor and analyse waste: Regularly monitor and analyse the types and amounts of food waste your care homes produce.

Use this data to identify patterns and areas for improvement. Consider investing in waste tracking technology to streamline this process. Understanding where and why waste occurs allows you to implement targeted strategies to reduce it.

Don't forget that new food waste legislation is now in force which impacts all businesses with more than 10 employees. All food waste must be collected from workplaces, regardless of volume. This includes premises that do not serve food.

“The UK alone throws away around 9.5m tonnes of food waste in a single year.”

This is as part of the Environmental Act 2021. The new reforms named Simpler Recycling aim to improve the existing recycling system. The intention is to streamline and simplify the recycling of waste.

Be mindful of what goes into producing your food, especially precious resources like water. A third of the water in global agriculture is linked to meat and dairy production. One of the simplest ways to reduce your care homes' water consumption and minimise water waste, is to reduce the meat and dairy on your menu and offer a wider variety of more sustainable ingredients.

With food inflation currently at 3% and expected to rise further due to increased labour costs, this is yet another motivation to change behaviour around your catering costs.

Reducing food waste will help you to save money for your care homes and that's not all – there are more great tips for managing your budget [here](https://allmanhall.co.uk).

<https://allmanhall.co.uk>

INNOVATING INDEPENDENCE

Small moments, like taking medication on time, can sustain independence and confidence for older people. As care demands grow, automated medication solutions are helping improve safety, support independent living at home, and deliver efficient, person-centred care, says Evondos.



With the wider care system facing increasing strain, rising business costs and a lack of funding for care are reshaping how care is delivered. One solution is shorter home visits, and while they seem cost-effective, in practice they can increase the risk of missed medication and missed early signs of deterioration - factors that could lead to hospital admissions and more extensive care needs. For carers, this model often increases stress and burnout; for those receiving care, it can feel rushed and impersonal. The question for care should not be how to make it cheaper, but how to use available resources more effectively.

Automated medication support, remote monitoring, and digital check-ins can help reduce the need for routine, task-based visits, while ensuring that individuals still receive safe and consistent support. By shifting some aspects of medication administration into supported self-management, with solutions like Evondos, care providers can focus their time where it is needed most.

■ RESPONDING WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

In a recent UK case study, 'Betty', whose family was away for the weekend, had a fall at home and was unable to get up. When her scheduled medications were missed, carers were alerted to check in by the Evondos Anna, an automated medication dispenser. Using the video functionality, the care team was able to make contact and quickly heard Betty calling out for help. Recognising that something was wrong, they acted immediately to provide urgent assistance. Betty was then admitted to the hospital for essential treatment – an intervention that may have prevented a far more serious, potentially life-altering outcome.

This example highlights how the combination of compassionate care and technology can provide reassurance and protection

when it matters most, enabling timely intervention even when individuals are physically alone.

■ BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

The benefits of this approach are also felt in everyday care delivery. Supporting individuals to take medication independently – while still maintaining oversight – can build confidence, reduce anxiety, and promote a greater sense of control. This can reduce the need for in-person visits, in turn lowering the pressure on care teams. For providers, this creates opportunities to use staff time more effectively and allows carers to focus on those with higher needs.

For example, 'Sam' was unable to leave his supported living accommodation due to ongoing medication challenges. With automated support in place, he began taking his medication consistently and on time, leading to improved mental health and reduced reliance on those around him. As a result, Sam was able to step down from 24/7 care to a sheltered setting – gaining greater independence while remaining safely supported.

Technology should never be seen as a replacement for care, but as an enabler of better care. Human connection, observation, and compassion remain at the heart of care work. However, digital and automated solutions can enhance safety and support a more sustainable delivery model. As pressures continue, the sector must look at approaches that protect both quality of care and workforce well-being. By combining innovation with empathy, it is possible to create systems that not only respond to today's challenges, but also help shape a safer, more resilient future for care delivery.

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SAFE DOSING

Ashley-Louise Lumley, Curam Champion Carer, explains how digital solutions for medication management can empower carers and patients.

For those with complex medical needs, keeping track of medication can be a challenge. Not only do the types and timings of doses need to be followed closely, but it is also crucial that medicine is ordered in time from the pharmacy or doctor to ensure that supplies don't run out.

The scale of incorrect medication throughout the NHS is vast, with an estimated 237m medication errors made each year. While there is little data available relating to patients and carers administering at home, care homes are responsible for 42% of medical errors, which have the potential to cause avoidable deaths.

When carers have multiple clients with various medical needs to understand or patients have conditions such as dementia limiting the role they can play in their medication management, staying on top of doses can be a difficult feat. Thankfully, medication management methods are progressing from daily pill boxes and hard copy medication administration records (MAR) towards more integrated technology. Devices such as persistent alarm carousel dispensers are hugely beneficial for giving patients more independence and there are also digital solutions that empower patients, families, and carers to be more confident in medication management.

AUTOMATING PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

Something that is extremely valuable to patients and their carers is pharmacy services that use predictive technology to streamline the process of stocking up on medicine. Digital reminders to reorder coupled with a delivery service that consolidates prescriptions into as few deliveries as possible makes it so much easier to keep tabs on which medication the patient has in stock.

For a care home managing medication for multiple residents which may be coming from different pharmacies, turning to an online, technology-driven pharmacy service will greatly reduce administrative burden.

This approach also makes medication more accessible for elderly or disabled patients who may not be able to make it to the pharmacy themselves. Without having to make pharmacy trips, carers and family have more time to spend socialising with the patient or helping around the house.

AI-POWERED DRUG ACCURACY

According to a BMJ Quality & Safety study, errors are made at every stage of the medication process. A business leading the way to turn tides on this is PillSorted, which uses AI and robotics to pick drugs and sort them into single pouches, eliminating the errors that can occur during dispensing.

Once dispensed, patients receive a chart containing doctor's instructions and visual aids that update with each new dispense,

adapting to supplier changes that produce medicines in varying shapes, doses and colours. These personalised charts can be shared with everyone involved in a patient's care.

As the responsibility of medication management often falls to various people, such as family members and multiple carers, as well as the patient themselves who all need oversight of medication administration, this is a valuable tool. Without it, patients could be at risk of double dosing or missing a dose, both of which have the potential to cause serious harm to their health. Family members have peace of mind that their loved one is receiving the correct medication, and carers and family can confidently share care duties knowing that there is a clear log, further empowering them to safely administer medicine.

PRIORITISING DIGITAL IN THE FUTURE OF MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Technology is streamlining many aspects of life, and while health and social care may be relatively slow on the uptake, implementing it into medication management is highly valuable for those providing care. Families can have oversight of their family member's records while carers can use tools to manage medications for multiple clients with absolute confidence.

Accessing and administering medicines correctly can be a hassle for patients and those who provide their care, but emerging digital solutions are the key to assuring that patients are being well cared for by empowered, knowledgeable caregivers.

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HOSPITALS & HOUSEKEEPING PRODUCTS

www.brightwell.co.uk
www.robert-scott.co.uk
www.vileda-professional.com

INJURY PREVENTION

www.win-health.com
www.joerns.co.uk/

INTERIOR DESIGN

www.access21interiors.co.uk

INTERNAL BINS

www.trojanbins.com

JANITORIAL SUPPLIERS

www.bio-productions.com
www.pmcpolythene.co.uk
www.metsagroup.com/katrin
www.robert-scott.co.uk
www.vileda-professional.com
www.metsagroup.com/katrin

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

www.win-health.com

NURSE CALL SYSTEMS

www.aidcall.co.uk
www.medicaresystems.co.uk
www.nsgroup.co.uk
www.southerncare.co.uk

ONLINE LEARNING

www.securicare.com

ONLINE LEARNING PROTECTION

www.digitalcarehub.co.uk/

PAIN RELIEF

www.win-health.com/pain-relief-electrotherapy.html

PATIENT HANDLING EQUIPMENT

www.joerns.co.uk/

PREVENTING & MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

www.securicare.com

POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT

www.securicare.com

PROTECTION

www.win-health.com
www.digitalcarehub.co.uk/

SACK HOLDERS

www.trojanbins.com

TRAINING

www.securicare.com
www.joerns.co.uk
www.digitalcarehub.co.uk/

UNIFORMS/CLOTHING

www.alexandra.co.uk
www.broschdirect.com

WASHROOM

www.agecareeastern.co.uk
www.gainsborough.com
www.vileda-professional.com
www.metsagroup.com/katrin
www.robertscott.co.uk

WASHROOM HYGIENE PRODUCTS & EQUIPMENT

www.baywesteurope.com
www.brightwell.co.uk
www.lucartgroup.com
www.metsagroup.com/katrin
<https://kennedy-hygiene.com/>
www.startissueuk.co.uk
www.robertscott.co.uk

WASTE MANAGEMENT

www.phs.co.uk
www.broschdirect.com

WELLBEING

www.win-health.com

WIPES

<https://chicopee.com/en-eu/>
www.vileda-professional.com
www.robertscott.co.uk

